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WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS SEQUELS, CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME IV.—MARMONTEL.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT,

AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXXIX.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES,
Stamford-street.

MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF:

CONTAINING

HIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL LIFE,

AND ANECDOTES OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF MARMONTEL.

You have just seen, my dear children, through how many difficulties I arrived at the Academy. But I have not told you with what thorns the vanity of talents had strewed my way.

During the contrarieties I experienced, madame Geoffrin was uneasy; she would sometimes pretend to rally me about them; but at every new election that retarded mine, I saw she was vexed. "Well," would she say to me, "is it then decided that you are not to be of the Academy?" I, who did not wish her to be disturbed about it, answered negligently, that it was the least of my cares; that the author of the 'Henriade,' of 'Zaïre,' of 'Merope,' had not been received there till after he was fifty, and that I was not forty; that I should perhaps belong to it one day; that many honest men, and of distinguished merit, consoled themselves for not being of it, and that I should console myself like them. I begged her to be as little concerned about it as myself. She was not the less uneasy; and, from time to time, in her way, and by little subtle words, she sounded the dispositions of the academicians.

One day she asked me, "What has M. de Marivaux done to you, to induce you to mock at him

and turn him into ridicule?"—"Me, madame!"—"Yes, you, who laugh in his face, and make others laugh at his expense"—"Really, madame, I do not know what you mean to say."—"I mean to say what he has told me: Marivaux is an honest man, he cannot have imposed upon me."—"Then he must explain to me himself what I do not understand. For in my life he has never been, either present or absent, the subject of my ridicule."—"Well! call on him, and endeavour," said she, "to convince him of the contrary; for, even in his complaints, he is lavish of your praise." Crossing the garden of the Palais Royal, where he lodged, I saw and accosted him.

He had at first some repugnance to explain himself; and he repeated to me that he would not be the less just to me whenever I should present myself for the Academy. "Sir," said I at last, with some impatience, "let us leave the Academy out of the question, it makes no part of my motive for addressing you; it is not your vote that I solicit; it is your esteem that I reclaim, and of which I am jealous."—"You have it entirely," answered he. "If I have it, be pleased to tell me then, in what I have given rise to the complaints you make of me."—"What!" said he, "have you forgotten at madame Dubocage's, one evening, as you were sitting by madame de Villaumont, you never ceased, either of you, to look at me and laugh, whispering to each other? It certainly was at me you laughed, and I don't know why, for on that day I was not more ridiculous than usual."

"Fortunately," said I, "what you would remind me of is fresh in my memory: the fact is this, madame de Villaumont saw you for the first time; and as the company were crowding round you, she asked me who you were. I told her your name. She, who knew an officer of the same name, insisted that you were not M. de Marivaux Her obstinacy

diverted me; mine appeared ridiculous to her; and in describing to me the face of the Marivaux she knew, she looked at you: this is the whole mystery."—"Yes," replied he, ironically; "the mistake was very laughable! yet you had both a certain arch and bantering air that I well understand, and which is not that of simple pleasantry."—"Yet ours was very simple and very innocent, I assure you. Besides too," added I, "it is the naked truth. I thought I owed it to you, and I have now paid it; if you do not believe me, I shall then, sir, have a right to complain of you." He assured me that he believed me; though he did not fail to tell madame Geoffrin that he had only taken this explanation for an adroit way of excusing myself to him. Death deprived me of his vote; but had he given it me, he would have thought himself generous.

Madame de Villaumont, whom I have mentioned to you, was the daughter of madame Gaulard, and the rival of madame de Brienne in beauty, which was more lively and inviting.

Madame Dubocage, at whose house we sometimes supped, was a women of letters, of an estimable character, but without relief and without colouring. She, like madame Geoffrin, had a literary society, but infinitely less agreeable, and analogous to her mild, cold, formal, and melancholy disposition. I had belonged to it for some time, but its gravity oppressed me, and I was driven from it by tediousness. In this woman, who was for a moment celebrated, the thing truly admirable was, her modesty. She saw engraved at the bottom of her portrait—'Formâ Venus, arte Minerva;' and she was never caught in one impulse of vanity. Let us return to the complaints that were made against me by men of another character.

Among the academicians, whose votes were not assured to me, we reckoned the president Hénault and Moncrif. Madame Geoffrin spoke to them, and

returned to me in a rage. "It seems clear," said she, "that you pass your life in making yourself enemies! There's Moncrif furious against you; and the president Hénault is scarcely less irritated."—"At what, madame? what have I done to them?"—"What have you done! why you have written your 'Poëtique;' for you have always the rage for writing."—"And what is it in this book that irritates them?"—"As for Moncrif, I know what it is," said she; "he makes no secret of it, but speaks publicly. You quote a song of his, and you mutilate it. It was in five couplets; you cite but three of them."—"Alas! madame, I have cited the best, and I have only left out those which repeated the same idea."—"Indeed! that is exactly what he complains of, you thought proper to correct his work. Living or dying, he will never pardon you."—"Then let him live and die my enemy, madame, for the two couplets of his song: I will support my misfortune. And the good president,—what is my offence to him?" "He has not told me; but, I believe, it is of your book too that he complains. I shall know it." He told it her. But, when I pressed her to repeat it to me, it was a comic scene at which the abbé Raynal was present.

"Well, madame, you have seen the president Hénault; has he told you at last what has been my offence?"—"Yes, I know it; but he forgives you; he is willing to forget it; let's say no more about it."—"At least, madame, I ought to know what this involuntary crime is, that he has the goodness to forget."—"Why know it? That's very useless. You will have his vote, that's enough."—"No, it is not enough; and I do not like to endure complaint without knowing why."—"Madame," said the abbé Raynal, "I think M. Marmontel is right."—"Don't you see," replied she, "that he wants to know it, only that he may turn it into ridicule, or make a tale of it?"—"No, madame, I

promise you never to mention it, from the moment I shall know what it is."—"What it is! why, always your book and your rage for quotations. I think I have your book there?"—"Yes, madame, there it is."—"Let's see that song of the president's that you have quoted among your drinking songs. Here it is:—

"Console me for a mistress that's false," &c.

From whom had you this song?"—"From Géliote." "Well, then, Géliote has not given it you such as it really is, if I must tell you. You have left out an *Oh!*"—"An *Oh!* madame!"—"Why yes, an *Oh.* Is there not a verse that begins, 'What charms?'"—"Yes, madame:—

"What charms! ye heavens! what beauty."—

"That's it: there's the fault. You should have said, 'Oh, ye heavens! what beauty!'"—"Why, madame, the sense is the same."—"Yes, sir, but when you cite, you should cite correctly. Every man is jealous of what he has written; that is natural. The president did not ask you to quote his song."—"I have quoted it with praise."—"Then you should not have changed it. Since he had put, 'Oh ye heavens!' that pleased him best. What had he done to you, that you must deprive him of his *Oh?* However, he has faithfully assured me that it will not prevent him from doing justice to your talents."

The abbé Raynal had a most longing desire to burst into laughter, and I too, but we contained ourselves: for madame Geoffrin was already sufficiently confused; and, when she was in the wrong, it was no joking matter.

As we went away, I related to the abbé my adventure with Marivaux, and my dispute with Moncrif. "Ah!" said he, "that proves to us that, when a man is said to have enemies, we should well enquire

whether he has deserved them, before we condemn him."

When I had passed this streight, my life resumed its free and tranquil course. It was divided between the town and the country, and both made me happy. Of my societies in town, the only one I no longer frequented was that of *les Menus Plaisirs*. Cury, who had been the soul of it, was infirm and ruined. He died a short time afterwards.

When his secret became known (and it was not so till after his death) I have sometimes heard it said in society, that he ought to have declared himself the author of the parody. I always maintained that he ought not; and woe to me if he had done it, for it would have been he whom they would have oppressed, and I should have died with grief. My fault was my own, and it would have been in the highest degree unjust if another had suffered for it. Besides, the parody, such as the world had seen it, full of gross insults, was not that which he had written. In accusing himself of the one, he ought then to have been permitted to disavow the other; and had he made this distinction, would it have been listened to? His ruin would have been inevitable, and I should have been the cause of it. By remaining silent, he did what was most just, and best to do for me and for himself, and I owed to him the sweets of the life I led after my most happy misfortune had restored me to myself and to my friends.

I do not number among my intimate associates the assembly that was held every evening at mademoiselle l'Espinasse's; for, with the exception of some of d'Alembert's friends, as the chevalier de Chastellux, the abbé Morellet, Saint Lambert, and myself, this circle was formed of men who were not at all acquainted with each other. She had taken them here and there in society, but so well matched, that when they were there, they found themselves in

most perfect harmony, like the strings of an instrument tuned by a single hand. To follow the comparison, I might say that she played on this instrument with an art that had the features of genius. She seemed to know what sound the string that she was about to touch would produce. I mean to say, she was so well acquainted with our minds and dispositions, that she had but to speak a word to bring them into play. Nowhere was conversation more lively, more brilliant, nor better regulated than at her's. That degree of temperate, and ever equal warmth, in which she knew how to support it; now, by gently inclining it to moderation, and now by animating it, was a rare phenomenon.—The continual activity of her soul communicated itself to our minds, but without excess: her imagination was its spring, her reason its regulator.—And take notice, that the understandings she thus moved at her will, were neither weak nor light: the Condillacs and the Turgots were of the number; d'Alembert by her side was like a simple and a docile child. Her talent for throwing out an idea, and giving it for debate to men of this class; her talent for discussing it herself, and like them with precision, sometimes with eloquence; her aptitude to introduce new ideas and vary conversation, with the ease and facility of a fairy, who, with a stroke of her wand, changes, at her will, the scene of her enchantments. These merits, I say, were not those of an ordinary woman. It was not with the follies of fashion and vanity that she every day, during four hours of conversation, without languor, and without interval, knew how to render herself interesting to a circle of enlightened men. It is true, that one of her charms was that ardent disposition which gave passion to her language, and communicated to her opinions the warmth, the interest, the eloquence of sentiment. Often, too, at her house, and very often, reason became gay: a mild philosophy there allowed itself a gentle pleasantry; d'Alembert

gave the tone of it; and who ever knew better than he—

———"To mix
The severe with the comic, the grave with the gay?"

The history of a woman so singularly endowed by nature as mademoiselle l'Espinasse, should be, to you, my dear children, curious and interesting. The recital of it will not be long.

There was at Paris a marchioness du Défant, full of wit, caprice, and ill-humour; gallant, and tolerably beautiful in her youth, but old at the time of which I am speaking, almost blind, and tormented by spleen and melancholy. Retired to a convent on a narrow fortune, she did not cease to keep the brilliant society in which she had lived. She had become acquainted with d'Alembert at her old lover's, the president Hénault's, over whom she still tyrannised, and who, naturally very timid, had continued to be the slave of fear long after he had ceased to be that of love. Madame du Défant, charmed with the wit and gaiety of d'Alembert, had invited him to her house, and so captivated him that he was inseparable from her. He lived at a distance from her, and never passed a day without going to see her.

At the same time, to fill the vacant moments of her solitude, madame du Défant was looking for a young, well-educated girl, without fortune, who would be her companion, and who, in the quality of friend, that is, of a devoted slave, would live with her in her convent. She happened to meet with mademoiselle l'Espinasse, and she was enchanted with her, as you may suppose. D'Alembert was not less charmed to find so interesting a third at the house of his old friend.

Between this young lady and him, misfortune had made an affinity that might well induce their souls to harmonise. They were both what are called children of love. I saw this nascent friendship,

when madame du Défant used to bring them with her to sup at my friend madame Harenc's; and it was then that our acquaintance began. There wanted nothing less than such a friend as d'Alembert to soften, and render supportable to mademoiselle l'Espinasse the melancholy and severity of her situation; for it was not enough to be the slave of perpetual attentions to a blind and splenetic woman, it was requisite to live with her, to turn day into night, and night into day, as she did, and to sit by her bedside, and read her to sleep; an exertion that was mortal to this young girl, naturally delicate, and from which her exhausted lungs were never afterwards able to recover. Yet she withstood it till an incident happened that broke her chain.

Madame du Défant, after having sat up all night at home, or at madame de Luxembourg's, who kept as late hours as herself, used to sleep all day, and was not visible till about six in the evening. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, retired in her little chamber that looked into the court of the convent, did not rise more than an hour before her marchioness; but that hour so precious, stolen from her slavery, was employed in receiving in her own apartment her personal friends, d'Alembert, Chastellux, Turgot, and myself occasionally. Now these gentlemen were likewise the habitual company of madame du Défant; and the moments they thus passed with mademoiselle l'Espinasse were stolen from her; this private rendezvous was therefore a secret from her; for they easily foresaw that she would be jealous of it. She discovered it, and insisted that it was nothing less than treason. She told it everywhere, accusing this poor girl of withdrawing her friends from her, and declaring that she would no longer nourish such a serpent in her bosom.

This separation was abrupt; but mademoiselle l'Espinasse was not abandoned. All the friends of madame du Défant were become her's. It was easy

for her to persuade them that the anger of this woman was unjust. The president Hénault himself declared for her. The duchess of Luxembourg thought her old friend in the wrong, and made mademoiselle l'Espinasse a present of some furniture for the lodgings she took. Finally, through the duke de Choiseul, her friends obtained for her from the king an annual gratification that put her above want, and the most distinguished circles in Paris disputed the pleasure of her company.

D'Alembert, to whom madame du Défant imperiously proposed the alternative of renouncing the friendship of mademoiselle l'Espinasse, or her own, did not hesitate, and gave himself wholly to his young friend. They lived at a distance from each other; and though in bad weather it was painful for d'Alembert to return in an evening from Belle Chasse street to Michael le Comte street, where his nurse lived, he did not think of quitting this latter. But at her house he fell sick, and so dangerously as to alarm Bouvart, his physician. His disorder was one of those putrid fevers, the first remedy of which is a free and pure air. Now his lodging at his glazier's was a little chamber, badly lighted, badly aired, with a bed like a coffin. Bouvart declared to us that the incommodiousness of this lodging might be fatal.—Watelet offered him one in his hotel, near the bouvelard du Temple; he was carried there; and mademoiselle l'Espinasse, whatever might be thought and said of it, determined to be his nurse. No one thought or said anything of it but in praise.

D'Alembert was restored to life, and, from that moment, consecrating his days to her who had preserved them, he desired to live near her. Nothing could be more innocent than their intimacy: it was therefore respected; malice itself never attacked it; and the consideration that mademoiselle l'Espinasse enjoyed, far from suffering any blemish from it, was the more honourably and firmly established.

But this union, so pure, and on the part of d'Alembert always tender and unalterable, was neither so grateful to him nor so happy as it ought to have been.

The ardent soul and romantic imagination of mademoiselle l'Espinasse made her conceive the project of rising from the narrow mediocrity in which she was fearful of finishing her days. With all the means she possessed of seducing and of pleasing, without being even beautiful, it appeared to her very possible, that, in the number of her friends, and even among the most distinguished, some one might be so in love with her as to offer her his hand. This ambitious hope, more than once deceived, did not despond; it changed its object, always more exalted, and so lively, that it might have been taken for the intoxication of love. For instance, she was at one time so passionately struck with what she called the heroism and the genius of Guibert, that in the art of war and for the talent of writing she saw nothing comparable to him. Yet he escaped her like the rest. Then it was the conquest of the marquis de Mora, a young Spaniard of high birth, to whom she thought she might aspire; and indeed, whether it were love or enthusiasm, this young man had conceived a passionate sentiment for her. We saw him more than once in adoration before her, and the impression she had made on his heart assumed so serious a character, that the family of the marquis hastened to recall him. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, crossed in her desires, was no longer the same with d'Alembert; and he not only endured her coldness and caprice, but often the bitterness of her wounded temper. He brooked his sorrows, and complained only to me. Unhappy man! such were his devotion and obedience to her, that, in the absence of M. de Mora, it was he who used to go early in a morning to ask for his letters at the post-office, and bring them to her when she woke. At last, the young Spaniard falling sick in his own

country, and his family waiting only his recovery to marry him suitably, mademoiselle l'Espinasse contrived to have it pronounced, by a physician at Paris, that the climate of Spain would be mortal to him; that, if his friends wished to save his life, they should send him to breathe the air of France; and this consultation, dictated by mademoiselle l'Espinasse, was obtained by d'Alembert from his intimate friend Lorry, one of the most celebrated physicians in Paris. The authority of Lorry, supported by the patient, had in Spain all its effect. The young man was suffered to set off on his return, but he died on the road; and the deep sorrow that mademoiselle l'Espinasse felt at it, completed the destruction of that frail machine which her ambition had ruined, and brought her to the grave.

D'Alembert was inconsolable for his loss. It was then that he came, as it were, to bury himself in the lodging that he had at the Louvre. I have said elsewhere how he there passed the rest of his life. He often complained to me of the fatal solitude into which he fancied himself fallen. In vain did I remind him of what he had so often said to me, on the change in his fair friend. "Yes," answered he, "she was changed, but I was not; she no longer lived for me, but I ever lived for her. Since she is no more, I know not why I live. Ah! why have I not still to suffer those moments of bitterness, that she so well knew how to sweeten and make me forget! Do you remember the happy evenings we passed together? Now, what have I left? I return home, and, instead of herself, I find but her shade. This lodging at the Louvre is itself a tomb, which I never enter but with horror."

I here relate in substance the conversations we had together as we walked alone in an evening in the Tuileries; and I ask, whether this be the language of a man to whom nature had refused sensibility of heart?

Much happier than he, I lived in a circle of the most seducing women, without being tied to any one by the bonds of slavery. Neither the pretty and inviting Filleul, nor the witty and beautiful Séran, nor the dazzling Villaumont, nor any one of those who most delighted me, troubled my repose. As I well knew they did not think of me, I had neither the simplicity nor the fatuity to think of them. I could have said with Atys, and with more sincerity,—

"I love the opening rose;
Its odours let me taste:
And had it not its thorn,
I'd press it to my breast."

What charmed me in them, were the graces of the mind, the mobility of their imagination, the easy and natural turn of their ideas and language, and a certain delicacy of fancy and feeling, that, like their faces, seems reserved for their sex. Their conversations were a school not less useful to me than agreeable; and, as much as possible, I profited by their lessons.—He that will write with precision, energy, and vigour only, may live only with men; but he who wishes for suppleness in his style, for amenity, and for that something which charms and enchants, will, I believe, do very right to live with women. When I read that Pericles sacrificed every morning to the Graces, what I understand by it is, that every day Pericles breakfasted with Aspasia.

Yet, however interesting on the score of intellect the society of these engaging women might be, it did not prevent me from going to fortify my mind, to elevate, extend, enlarge, and fertilise my ideas in a society of men, whose intellects infused warmth and light into mine. The house of baron d'Holbach, and afterwards that of Helvétius, was the rendezvous of this society, partly composed of the flower of madame Geoffrin's convivial friends, and partly of some others, who were thought by madame Geoffrin too bold and adventurous to be admitted to her

dinners. She esteemed baron d'Holbach, she loved Diderot, but silently, and without exposing herself for them. It is true, that she had admitted, and, as it were, adopted Helvétius, but it was while he was still young, and before he had committed any follies.

I never knew why d'Alembert kept himself aloof from the society of which I am speaking. He and Diderot, associates in the labours and glory of the undertaking of the 'Encyclopédie,' were at first cordially united; but they were now no longer so; they spoke of each other with much esteem, but they did not associate together, and scarcely ever met. I never dared to ask them the reason.

Jean Jacques Rousseau and Buffon were for some time of this philosophic society. But the former left us, an open enemy; and the latter, with more management and address, withdrew and kept himself apart. As for these, I think I well know what was the system of their conduct.

Buffon, with the king's cabinet and his natural history, felt himself strong enough to live with some magnificence. He saw that the *encyclopedique* school was out of favour at court and with the king; he was afraid of being involved in the common wreck; and, to continue his prosperous voyage with swelling sails, or at least to steer prudently among the rocks, he preferred having a free and separate bark to himself. At this no one was offended; but his retreat had yet another cause.

Buffon, surrounded at home by flatterers and devoted admirers, and accustomed to an obsequious deference for his systematic ideas, was sometimes disagreeably surprised to find among us less reverence and docility. I used to see him go away dissatisfied at the opposition he had endured. With incontestible merit, he had an arrogance and presumption by which it was at least equalled. Spoiled by adulation, and placed by the multitude in the class of our great men, he had the vexation of seeing that the ma-

thematicians, the chemists, and the astronomers, allotted him but a very inferior rank among them; that the naturalists themselves were but little disposed to put him at their head, and that among men of letters, he obtained only the slender praise of an elegant writer, and a great colourist. Some even reproached him with having written pompously on a subject that required a simple and natural style. I recollect, that one of his friends having asked me how I should speak of him, if I were chosen to make his funeral oration at the French Academy; I answered that I should give him a distinguished place among poets of the descriptive kind; a way of praising him with which he was by no means satisfied.

Buffon, uncomfortable with his peers, shut himself up at home with a few ignorant and servile flatterers, going to neither of the Academies, courting apart the favour of the ministers, and labouring to extend his reputation in foreign courts, from which he received handsome presents in exchange for his work; his peaceful vanity at least injured no one. It was not the same with that of Rousseau.

After the success which his two works, crowned at Dijon, had produced on the jejune, Rousseau, foreseeing that, by colouring paradoxes with his style, and by animating them with his eloquence, it would be easy for him to obtain a croud of enthusiasts, he conceived the ambition of forming a sect; and, instead of being a simple associate in the philosophic school, he wanted to be the chief and sole professor in a school of his own; but withdrawing from our society, like Buffon, without dispute and without noise, he would not have completed his object. To attract the crowd, he had attempted to give himself the air of an old philosopher; he shewed himself at the opera, in the coffee-houses, in the walks, first in an old great coat, and then in the habit of an Armenian; but neither his little

dirty wig, and the stick of Diogenes, nor his fur cap, arrested the passengers. He wanted some grand disturbance, to advertise the enemies of men of letters, and particularly of those who were marked with the name of philosophers, that J. J. Rousseau was divorced from them. This rupture would draw to him a croud of partisans; and he had well calculated that the priests would be of the number. It was therefore not enough for him to separate from Diderot and his friends, he abused them; and by a dart of calumny directed against Diderot, he gave the signal of the war he had declared against them on parting.

At the same time, their society, consoled for this loss, and little affected by the ingratitude which Rousseau professed, found in its own bosom the most grateful pleasures that the liberty of thought and the commerce of minds can procure. We were no longer led and held by leading-strings, as at madame Geoffrin's. But this liberty was not licence, and there are revered and inviolable subjects that were never submitted to the debate of opinion. God, virtue, the holy laws of natural morality, were there never held in doubt, at least in my presence; this I can attest. The career was still vast enough; and mind took such bold flights, there, that I sometimes thought I heard the disciples of Pythagoras or of Plato. It was there that Galiani was so astonishing for the originality of his ideas, and for the adroit, singular, unforeseen turn, by which he effected their development; it was there that the chemist Roux revealed to us, like a man of genius, the mysteries of nature; it was there that baron d'Holbach, who had read everything, and forgotten nothing interesting, poured out abundantly the riches of his memory; it was there, above all, with his mild and persuasive eloquence, and his face sparkling with the fire of inspiration, that Diderot spread light in every mind, and warmth in every

heart. He that has known Diderot only by his writings has not known him. His hypotheses on the art of writing disfigured his charming simplicity. When he was animated by conversation, and suffered the abundance of his ideas to flow from their source, he forgot his theories, and suffered himself to be carried on by the impulse of the moment; it was then that he was enchanting. In his writings, he never knew how to form a whole: that first operation, that regulates and puts everything in its place, was for him too slow and too painful. He wrote with fire, before he had meditated anything: so that he has written beautiful pages, as he used to say himself, but he has never written a book. This defect of plan disappeared in the free and varied course of conversation.

One of Diderot's fine moments, was when an author consulted him on his work. If the subject were worth the pains, you should have seen him seize it, penetrate it, and at one view discover of what riches and what beauties it was susceptible. If he perceived that the author had succeeded ill, instead of listening to the reading, his fancy supplied the defects of the work. If it were a play, he would imagine new scenes, new incidents, new traits of character; and, thinking he had heard what he had meditated, he extolled to us the piece that had just been read to him, and in which, when it appeared, we found scarcely anything of what he had cited. In general, and in all the branches of human knowledge, all was so familiar to him, and so present to his mind, that he always appeared prepared for whatever might be said to him; and his most sudden perceptions were like the results of recent study, or of long meditation.

This man, one of the most enlightened of the age, was likewise one of the most engaging: and particularly on what concerned moral goodness; when he spoke freely on it, I cannot express the charm

of his eloquence. His whole soul was in his eyes and on his lips. Never did the face better paint the goodness of the heart.

I do not mention those of our friends whom you have just seen under the eye of madame Geoffrin, and submitted to her discipline. At baron d'Holbach's, and at Helvétius's, they were at their ease, and so much the more agreeable; for mind, in its action, can only display to advantage its power and grace when there is nothing that confines it; and there it resembled Virgil's courser :—

> "Qualis, ubi abruptis fugit præsepia vinclis,
> Tandem liber, equus, campoque potitus aperto
> Emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus alte
> Luxurians."

You must feel how grateful it was to me to partake of excellent dinners three times a week in such good company: we were all so happy together, that when the fine weather came, we mixed with these dinners philosophical walks in the environs of Paris, on the borders of the Seine. On those days, we used to make pic-nic dinners; and the feast was an ample *matelote:* we visited, in their turn, the places most celebrated for fine fish, most frequently St Cloud: we used to go down there in a morning in a boat, breathing the air of the river, and we returned in the evening through the wood of Boulogne. You will readily believe, that in these excursions conversation rarely languished.

Finding myself once alone for some minutes with Diderot, and our conversation turning on the letter to d'Alembert on the stage, I expressed to him my indignation at the note which Rousseau had added to the preface to the letter; it was a concealed dagger with which he had wounded Diderot. The text of the letter was this :—

"I had a severe and judicious Aristarchus: I have him no longer, I will have him no longer; and my heart has still less need of him than my writings."

The note he had added to the text was this :—

"If you have drawn your sword against your friend, do not despair; for there are means of being reconciled to your friend. If you have grieved him by your words, fear nothing; it is still possible to be reconciled to him. But for abuse, injurious reproof, the revealing of a secret, and the wound made in his heart by treachery, there is no pardon in his eyes; he will depart to return no more."—*Ecclesiast.* xxii. 26, 27.

All the world knew that this defamatory note was addressed to Diderot, and many people thought that he had deserved it, because he did not refute it.

"My opinion," said I, "can never waver between you and Rousseau: I know you, and I think I know him. But tell me by what madness, and under what pretext, he has so cruelly abused you." "Let us retire," said he, "into this solitary alley: there I will confide to you what I deposit only in the bosom of my friends."

BOOK VIII.

When Diderot perceived we were alone, and so far from the company as not to be overheard, he thus began his recital:—"If you did not already know a part of what I have to tell you, I should observe the same silence with you that I observe with the public, on the origin and motive of the insult I have endured from a man whom I loved, and whom I still pity; for I am persuaded he is very wretched. It is cruel to be calumniated most atrociously and in the perfidious tone of violated friendship, and to be incapable of defence; yet such is my position. You will see that my reputation is not

the only one involved in this dispute; and when we can only defend our honour at the expense of that of another, we must be silent. I am so on that principle. Rousseau loads me with insult, without explaining himself; but I, in order to answer him, must be obliged to speak: I must divulge what he conceals; and he well foresaw that I should do no such thing. He was certain I should leave him the full enjoyment of his outrage, rather than publish a secret that is not mine. In this respect, Rousseau is a dishonourable aggressor; he strikes a disarmed man.

"You know what an unhappy passion Rousseau had conceived for madame * * *. He had one day the rashness to declare it to her in a way that could not but offend her. A little while afterwards he came to Paris to see me. 'I am a madman,' said he; 'I am ruined; I must confide to you what has happened.' He then related his adventure.—'Well!' said I, 'and were is the evil?'—'What!' he replied, 'where is the evil! don't you see that she will instantly write to * * * and say I have attempted to seduce her, to steal her from his love! and can you doubt of his accusing me of insolence and perfidy! Henceforth, I have made him my mortal enemy.'—'No such thing,' said I calmly; '* * * is a man of equity; he is acquainted with your character; he knows you are neither a Cyrus nor a Scipio. After all, of what could he complain? of a moment of wild forgetfulness and delirium. You must yourself, without delay, write to him, confess all, and, pleading as your excuse an intoxication of passion, which he cannot but understand, entreat him to pardon you this moment of error and disorder. I promise you, he will only recollect it to love you more tenderly.'

"Rousseau, transported with joy, embraced me. 'You restore me to life,' said he; 'your counsel reconciles me to myself: I will write this very

evening.'—When we saw each other, he appeared more tranquil, and I concluded he had done as we had agreed.

"Some time afterwards * * * arrived; and, calling on me, appeared, without explaining himself, so highly exasperated against Rousseau, that my first idea was, that Rousseau had never written.—'Have you received no letter from him?' I asked.—'Yes,' answered he, 'a letter that would justify the severest chastisement.'

"'Ah! sir,' I replied, 'is it possible that a moment of madness, which he confesses, and solicits you to pardon, should thus strongly irritate you? If that letter offend you, it is I whom you should accuse; for it is I who advised him to write.'—'And do you know,' answered he, 'what that letter contains?'—'I know that it contains an avowal, excuses, and intreaties of pardon.'—'Far from it. It is a tissue of knavery and insolence; it is a master-piece of artifice to cast on madame * * * the wrong of which he endeavours to clear himself.'—'You astonish me,' said I: 'that is by no means what he promised me to write.' Then, in order to appease him, I simply related the grief and repentance which Rousseau had manifested at the idea of having offended him, and the resolution he had formed of asking his pardon: thus, I led him, without difficulty, till I excited his pity.

"It is to this explanation that Rousseau has given the name of perfidy. As soon as he learned that I had made a confession for him, which he had not made for himself, he fell into an excess of rage, and accused me of having betrayed him. Of this I was told, and went to him.—'Why are you come here?' asked he.—'I come,' said I, 'to know whether you are mad, or malicious.'—'Neither,' he replied; 'but you have wounded, you have rent my heart. Our friendship is at an end.'—I asked what I had done.—He answered, 'You have dived into

the deepest recesses of my soul; you have torn from me my secret, and betrayed it. You have exposed me to the contempt, to the hatred of a man, who will never forgive me.' I suffered this boiling passion to evaporate; and, when he had exhausted himself in reproaches—'We are alone,' said I; 'and, between ourselves, your eloquence is fruitless. Our judges here are, reason, truth, your conscience and my own. Will you interrogate them?' Without answering me, he threw himself into his arm-chair, concealing his eyes with his hands, and I continued:

"'The day,' said I, 'on which we agreed that you should be sincere, in your letter to * * *, you told me you were reconciled to yourself. Who induced you to change your resolution!—You do not answer; I will answer for you. When it became requisite for you to take your pen, and make the unfortunate confession of an unfortunate folly, a confession that at the same time would but have done you honour, your infernal pride assumed all its empire. Yes, your pride: you have accused me of perfidy, and I have endured it; suffer me, in return, to accuse you of pride; for, had you not that plea, your conduct would be meanness. Pride then whispered to you that it would be unworthy of your character to humble yourself before this man, and to ask pardon of a happy rival; that it was not yourself you should accuse, but her, whose seducing graces, bewitching coquetry, and flattering blandishments, had enticed you. And you, with all your art, colouring this plausible excuse, did not perceive that by attributing the lures of a coquette to a woman of delicacy and sensibility, in the eyes of a man who esteems and loves her, you injured two hearts at once.'—'Well!' cried he, 'suppose me unjust, imprudent, mad, what do you infer from it that can justify you in my sight for having betrayed my confidence, and revealed the secret of my heart?'—'I infer,' replied I, 'that it is *you* who have deceived *me;* it is you who have induced me to

defend you, as I have done. Why did you not tell me that you had changed your intention? I should not have spoken of your repentance; I should not have fancied that I was simply repeating the language of your letter. You concealed yourself from me in order to do what you well knew I should not have approved; and, when this act of your wisdom has the effect that it ought to have, you impute it to me as a crime! Go, since in the sincerest and tenderest friendship you seek for subjects of hatred! your heart knows only how to hate.'

"'Courage, barbarian!' said he, 'complete the torments of a feeble and miserable man. For consolation, I had nothing left me on earth but my own esteem, and you come to wrest it from me.'—Rousseau was then more eloquent, and more touching in his affliction, than he had ever been in his life. Pierced to the heart at the sitnation in which I saw him, my eyes overflowed with tears; my weeping affected him, and he received me in his arms.

"Behold us then reconciled; he occasionally continuing to read to me his 'Nouvelle Héloise,' which he had finished, and I going on foot, two or three times a-week, from Paris to his hermitage, to hear him, and to answer as a friend the confidence of my friend. Our rendezvous was in the woods of Montmorency; I used to arrive there excessively heated; and he never forbore complaining, if I made him wait. At that time appeared his letter on the stage, with that beautiful passage from Solomon, by which he accuses me of having abused and betrayed him.

"'What!' said I to myself, 'in time of profound peace! After our reconciliation! It is not credible!' —yet it is the simple truth. Rousseau wanted to separate from me and my friends; and he had missed a most favourable opportunity. What could indeed be more convenient than to attribute wrongs to me, from which I could not clear myself? Vexed at having lost this advantage, he resumed it, persuaded

himself that, on my part, our reconciliation had been but a scene that was played, and in which I had imposed on him."

"What a man!" I exclaimed; "and he fancies himself kind-hearted!" Diderot replied: "He should be so, for he was born with sensibility; and, at a distance, he loves every human being. He only hates those who approach him, because his vanity induces him to think that they are all envious of him; that they serve only to humble him; that they flatter him but to injure; and that even those who pretend to love him share in the conspiracy. This is his disease. Interesting from his misfortunes, his talents, and a fund of kindness and rectitude that his heart cherishes, he would have friends, if he believed in friendship. As it is, he will never have any, or they will love him singly; for he will always distrust them. This fatal mistrust, this light and prompt facility, not only of suspecting, but of believing of his friends all that is most atrocious, most mean, and most infamous; of attributing to them baseness and perfidy, without any other proof than the dreams of an ardent and gloomy imagination, the vapours of which cloud his disordered brain, and with a malignant influence sour and poison his gentlest affections; in short, this delirium of a melancholy and timid mind, made savage by misfortune, was most truly the disease of Rousseau, and the torment of his mind."

Of this every day furnished fresh examples, by the injurious way in which he broke with those who were most devoted to him, accusing them at one time of secret projects for ensnaring him, at another of coming to his house only to be spies on his actions, that they might betray and sell him to his enemies. I know some of these details that are incredible. But the most astonishing of all was, the monstrous ingratitude with which he repaid the tender, indulgent, and active friendship of the virtuous David Hume,

and the deep malignity with which, in calumniating him, he added insult to injury. You will find, even in the collection of the works of Rousseau, this monument of his shame. You will there perceive with what artifice he contrived his calumny; you will there see from what false lights he fancied he could convict his truest friend, the most honourable and the best of men, of duplicity, of infamy, and of violated faith. You will not read without indignation, in the recital he makes of his conduct towards his benefactor, this turn of raillery, which is the extreme of insolence:

> "First box on the ear, from my patron.
> "Second box on the ear, from my patron.
> "Third box on the ear, from my patron."

I believe the opinion is universal, and fully decided with respect to these two men; but if, to the idea that is entertained of the character of David Hume, some proof were still wanting, here are facts to which I was a witness.

When, on the recommendation of my lord Marshal and the countess de Boufflers, Hume offered Rousseau to procure him a free and tranquil retreat in England, and Rousseau had accepted this generous offer; Hume, who was acquainted with baron d'Holbach, informed him, just before his departure, that he was to take Rousseau away with him into his native country—"Sir," said the baron, "you are warming a viper in your bosom: of this I warn you; you will feel its bite."

The baron had himself welcomed Rousseau, and shown him every indulgence; his house was the rendezvous of those who were called philosophers; and, in the full security with which the inviolable sanctity of the asylum where they met, inspires honourable minds, d'Holbach and his friends had admitted Rousseau to their particular intimacy. In his 'Emile,' you may see how he had noted them.

Most certainly, had the title of atheism, which he has fixed to their society, been simply to publish a fact, it would have been odious. But, with respect to the greater number, it was a calumnious accusation; which he well knew. He well knew that the theism of his vicar had among them its proselytes, and its zealots. The baron, then, had been taught, at his own expense, to understand the character of Rousseau. But the good David Hume fancied he saw more passion than truth in the baron's observation. He therefore took Rousseau to England, and there rendered him all the kindest offices of friendship. He believed, as he naturally might, that he had restored the most feeling, and the best of men to happiness: on this he congratulated himself in all the letters which he wrote to baron d'Holbach; and did not cease to combat the bad opinion that the baron entertained of Rousseau. He spoke to him in praise of the kindness, the candour, the ingenuousness of his friend. He used to say, "It is painful to me to think that you are unjust to him. Believe me, Rousseau can never have a bad heart. The more I see of him, the more I esteem and love him." Every courier brought letters from Hume to d'Holbach, that repeated the same praises; and the latter, on reading them to us, would say, 'He does not know him yet; he will know him ere long.' Indeed, a little time afterwards he received a letter in which Hume begins thus: 'you were very right, baron! Rousseau is a monster!'—'Ah!' said the baron to us, coolly and without surprise, 'he knows him at last.'

How could so abrupt and so sudden a change have happened in the opinion of the one, and in the conduct of the other? You will see it explained in the narrative of facts, published by the two parties. Here, what I ought to certify and attest is, that, while Rousseau was accusing Hume of deceiving, of betraying, of dishonouring him in London, that same Hume, full of candour, zeal, and friendship, was

exerting himself to destroy the fatal impressions he had left at Paris, and to re-establish him in the esteem and benevolence of those who held him in most aversion and contempt.

What ravages had an excess of pride made in a heart naturally gentle and tender! With so much intellect, and such talents, what weakness, what littleness, what contemptible meanness in that restless, melancholy, irascible, and vindictive vanity, that was irritated at the bare idea of an attempt to wound it! that fancied injuries without the least proof, and that never pardoned these imaginary crimes! What an important lesson to minds that incline to the vice of vanity! But for that, no one would have been more beloved or more esteemed than Rousseau. It was the poison of his life: to him it rendered services odious, benefactors insupportable, gratitude importunate; made him injure and repulse friendship; and caused him to live wretched, and die almost abandoned. Let us turn to gentler objects, that relate more nearly to myself.

Neither the pleasant life I led at Paris, nor my still more pleasant country excursions, ever stole from my dear Odde and my sister the delicious fortnight which every year was reserved for them, and which I went to pass with them at Saumur. It was there that the whole sensibility of my soul was absorbed in enjoyment. By this happy couple, who loved each other more than they loved life, or the light of heaven, I saw myself cherished and revered as the source of their happiness. I could not satiate myself with the inexpressible delight of contemplating my own work, in the happiness of two pure souls, whose every prayer was addressed to heaven for blessings on me. Their tenderness went to my heart; their piety enchanted me. Their manners were, if I may so say, native virtue in all its simplicity. To this continual and uninterrupted enjoyment was added that of seeing them beloved and

honoured in the town where they lived. Madame Odde was there quoted as the model for women; the name of M. Odde was synonymous with truth and justice. If the commission of the court of excise, established at Saumur, and the company of the farmers-general had any dispute, Odde was their umpire and their conciliator. I was a witness to this confidence, acquired by one who was as another self to me. I witnessed the love of the people for a man exercising a severe office, against whom no complaints were ever heard, so eminently did his humanity soften all transactions. I myself shared the respect that was paid to this pair. They were perpetually occupied in contriving new pleasures for me, and the few days we passed together were all days of rejoicing. You would never have been born, my dear children, if my good sister had lived. I should have retired quietly to pass my riper age with her: but she bore in her bosom the germ of that malady that had been fatal to all my family; and of the dear hope which I had so ardently cherished, I was too soon and too cruelly deprived.

In one of those happy journeys to Saumur, the vicinity of *la terre des ormes* induced me to pay a visit to the count d'Argenson, who had been minister of war, and whom the king had sent thither in exile. I had not forgotten the kindness he had shown me, in the time of his glory. Being young, when I wrote a little poem on the establishment of the military school, the principal honour of which was due to him, he had been pleased to set some value on this testimony of my zeal. At his dinners, he had presented me to the noblemen of the army, as a young man who had claims on his gratitude and protection. He received me in his exile with extreme sensibility. —Oh, my dear children! what an incurable disease is ambition! What sadness is that of the life of an exiled minister! Already worn out by labour and study, vexation was completing the ruin of his

health. His body was tormented with gout, his mind was still more cruelly tortured by reflection and regret: and, during the kind reception he was pleased to give me, I plainly saw in him the victim of various afflictions.

Walking with him in his gardens, I perceived a marble statue at a distance, and asked him what it was. "It is one," said he, "at which I have no longer the courage to look." He added, as we turned away, "Ah! Marmontel, if you knew with what zeal I have served him; if you knew how often he assured me we should pass our lives together, and that I had no better friend in the world! These are the promises of kings! This their friendship!" So saying, the tears started to his eyes.

In the evening, during supper, we remained alone in the drawing-room. This drawing-room was hung with pictures, that represented the battles in which the king had served with him in person. He showed me where they stood during the action; he repeated to me what the king had said; he had not forgotten one word. "Here," added he, speaking of one of these battles, "I was two hours in the firm persuasion that my son was dead. The king had the kindness to appear to sympathize in my affliction. How changed is he now! My sorrows affect him no more." By these ideas he was haunted; and, if he were suffered to indulge them, he sank, buried as it were in his grief. His daughter-in-law, madame de Voyer, would then hasten to seat herself by his side, press him in her arms, and caress him; while he, like a child, laying his head on the bosom, or on the knees of her who sympathised with him, would bathe them with tears that he did not wish to conceal.

This unhappy man, who lived only on boiled fish, on account of his gout, was thereby deprived too of that single pleasure of the senses which would have been grateful to him; for he loved to indulge

his appetite. But even the severest regimen did not alleviate his pains. In quitting him, I could not help showing I was strongly affected by his sorrows. "You add to them," said he, "the regret of not having done you service, when to me that would have been so easy." A little time afterwards, he obtained leave to be brought to Paris. I saw him arrive there dying, and there I received his last farewell.

Hereafter, my dear children, I will give you some curious details on the cause of his disgrace, and of that of his antagonist, M. de Machault, which happened on the same day. A motive of delicacy prevents me from inserting these particulars in memoirs; which by accident may escape from your possession. But, instead of this serious anecdote, I will tell you one that is comic; for my recital should sometimes amuse you.

My friend Vaudesir had an estate near Angers, which bore the name of his unhappy son, St James. As he knew I went every year to Saumur (on the road to Angers) to see my sister, he once offered to take me there in his postchaise, on condition that, before my return, I should pass three days at St James, whither he was going. I willingly accepted this proposal, and saw at St James the chief wits of the *Angevine* Academy; among others an abbé, who was very like the abbé Beau Génie in the 'Mercure Galant.' He had just signalized himself by a trait of folly so very singular, that it can scarcely be believed. "Well, you give me credit," said Vaudesir, "should he repeat it himself? Only aid me in leading him to the question, and you shall see." When dinner was nearly over, I brought the abbé into play, by talking to him of his Academy; on which Vaudesir made him a pompous eulogy. "Except the French Academy," said he; "there is no literary body more illustrious, or better constituted. The young M. de Contades has very lately

been received a member: M. l'abbé himself spoke on that occasion in the name of the Academy, with the greatest success."—"To the eulogy of the son," replied I, "M. l'abbé has not failed to add that of the father?"—"No certainly," said the abbé; "I took care not to neglect that, and I paid the marshal a just tribute of praise."—The field, I replied, was rich and vast. But there was one strait that was difficult to pass.—"Yes," said he, smiling, "the affair of Mindin—that was indeed the critical pass; but I got through it happily enough. First of all, I spoke of the actions by which marshal de Contades had merited the command of the armies; I retraced all that he had done most glorious till that period; and when I arrived at the battle of Minden, I said but two words: 'Contades appears, Contades is conquered.' I then passed on, continuing my panegyric." As it required all my exertion to stifle laughter, I wanted to turn the subject. "These words," said I, "call to my mind those of Cæsar, after the defeat of the son of Mithridates: 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'"—"True," answered the abbé; "my phrase has even been thought somewhat more laconic." The air of emphasis and gravity with which he pronounced his laconic folly was so ridiculous, that Vaudesir and I dared not look at each other, lest we should burst into laughter: we had the greatest difficulty to keep ourselves serious.

These journeys and this absence displeased madame Geoffrin. During the whole summer, I never went to the Academy. She heard me censured; she fancied I was injuring myself essentially, by resigning the game to the assiduous academicians (which, with respect to the Olivets, was certainly an idle fear), and I often endured smart reprimands on, what she called, the inconsistency of my conduct. "What can indeed be more absurd," said she, "than to have desired to belong to the Academy, and not to attend there after having been received?" My excuse was, the ex-

ample of the greater number, still less assiduous than myself. But she retorted with reason, that I was one of those whose academic functions required assiduity. She had too, her little personal interest in these remonstrances; for she passed the summers in Paris, and at that time was anxious that her literary society should not be dispersed. I listened to her counsel with a respectful modesty, and the next day stole away as if she had said nothing. It was very natural that her kindness for me should have cooled; but by being entertaining at a single dinner, I could reconcile myself to her, and on serious occasions she recollected her affection for me. I experienced it in two disorders, with which I was attacked at her house. One was that same fever which has seized me five times in my life, and which will eventually carry me: it attacked me while my *Poétique* [Art of Poetry] was in the press. I wanted to add some few articles; and this labour, with which my head was filled, rendered the delirium more fatiguing in the paroxysms of fever. My friends were very uneasy, and madame Geoffrin was alarmed; but the little physician Geoiglan, who used to attend her servants, restored me to perfect health.

My other disorder was a cold, of a singular kind: it was a viscous humour that obstructed the organ of respiration, attended with all the effort of a violent cough, though I could not expectorate. You may conceive that, after having seen all my family die in consumptions, I had some reason to think it was my turn. This I believed; and, deprived of sleep, growing visibly thin, in short finding myself on the decline, and concluding that the last period of the disease would soon announce itself by the customary symptoms, I resolved honourably to employ the little time that I might have left, and thought only of selecting some literary subject that might fully possess my fancy, and which after having

occupied my last moments, might leave some worthy traces of my memory.

One of my friends had given me a print of Belisarius, after the picture from Vandyke, which often attracted my notice, and I was astonished that poets had drawn nothing from a subject so moral, and so interesting. I conceived the desire of treating it myself, in prose; and, as soon as this idea was impressed on my mind, my malady was suspended as if by a sudden charm. Oh! marvellous power of imagination! The pleasure of inventing my fable, the care of arranging and developing it, the impressive interest which the first sketch of the situations and scenes I meditated excited in me, all dwelt so much on my mind, and so detached me from myself, as to render credible whatever is related of ecstatic raptures. My lungs were oppressed, I breathed painfully; I had a most violent convulsive cough; and I forgot them all! I could scarcely perceive their existence. My friends came to see me, and spoke of my illness; I answered like a man absorbed in other meditations: I was thinking of Belisarius. My wakefulness, that till then had been so painful, had no longer its weariness, nor the torment of inquietude. My nights, like my days, were passed in contemplating the adventures of my hero. I did not the less exhaust myself; and this continued exertion would have completely ended me, if a remedy had not been found for my complaint. It was Gatti, a physician of Florence, a celebrated promoter of inoculation, skilful in his profession, and a most engaging man, who called to see me, and saved my life. "It is only necessary," said he, "to dissolve that thick and glutinous humour, which impedes the action of the lungs; and the remedy is not unpleasant: you must drink plentifully of oxymel." I only therefore diluted, mixed, and warmed some excellent honey and vinegar; and the salutary use of the syrup, formed by this mixture, cured me in a

very short time. I had then been more than three months in the firm persuasion that I was dying; but, in those three months my work had advanced: the chapters that required historical study were all that remained to be composed. The labour of the imagination was performed; and that part was the most interesting.

If this work is of a graver character than my other writings, it is because, while composing it, I fancied I was uttering my last words,—*novissima verba*, as the ancients used to say. I first tried what effect the reading of it would have on the mind of Diderot; and secondly on that of the hereditary prince of Brunswick, now the reigning duke. Diderot was highly pleased with the moral part; he thought the political too concise, and advised me to extend it.

The prince of Brunswick, who was there on his travels through France, after having waged war against us with the loyalty of chivalry and the valour of a hero, enjoyed that high esteem at Paris which his virtues merited: a more flattering homage than the customary respect paid to men of his birth and rank. He was desirous of being present at a private sitting of the French Academy, an honour that till then had been reserved for crowned heads. In that sitting I read an ample extract from 'Belisarius,' and had the pleasure of seeing the face of the young hero beam with animation, at the images presented to him, while his eyes were suffused in tears.

He was particularly fond of the society of men of letters, and valued it highly, as you will presently see. Helvétius invited him to dine with us; and he owned he had never enjoyed a dinner so much in his life. I certainly did not merit to be particularly remarked, yet I was so. Helvétius having told the prince that he found a considerable likeness between him and the pretender, and the prince having answered that several persons had already made the same observation, I said, in a half-whisper, "Had

the likeness been somewhat more perfect, prince Edward would have been king of England." These words were heard, the prince felt them, and I saw him blush from modesty and bashfulness.

I was very certain that the success which the reading of Belisarius had obtained at the Academy, would at least be equalled by the disapprobation it would excite at the Sorbonne. But that was not what disturbed me; and, provided the court and the parliament did not interfere, I was willing enough to engage the theologians. I therefore took every precaution to have no enemies but them. The abbé Terray was not yet in the ministry; but, in the parliament, of which he was a member, he had the greatest credit. I went with madame Gaubard, his female friend, to pass some time at his country-seat of la Motte, and there I read to him 'Belisarius.' Although nature had given him but little sensibility, he showed some at this reading. After I had interested him in my behalf, I told him in confidence that I was apprehensive of some hostility on the part of the Sorbonne, and asked him if he thought that the parliament would condemn my book, in case it should be censured. He assured me that the parliament would take no part in the affair, and promised to be my defender, if any one should attack it there.

This was not all. I wanted it to be privileged, and to have an assurance that this privilege should not be revoked. I had no personal interest with old Maupeou, then keeper of the seals. But the wife of my bookseller, madame Merlin, was acquainted with and patronised by him. I employed her to sound him, and he promised us all his favour. It remained for me to secure the favour of the court, and here the perilous part of my book was not theology. I dreaded allusions, malicious applications, and the accusation of having thought, not of Justinian, but some one else, when I painted so feeble and deluded a monarch. Unhappily, there was but too much

analogy between the two reigns; the king of Prussia felt it so well, that, after he had received my work, he wrote to me with his own hand, at the bottom of his secretary (Lecat)'s letter: "I have just begun your 'Belisarius;' you are very bold!" Others might say it; and, had my enemies attacked me on that quarter, I had been ruined.

However, no direct precautions could be taken in this respect. The least inquietude shown by me, would have given the alarm, and convicted me. No one would have dared to encourage, or promise me assistance; and the first counsel I should have received would have been to throw my book into the fire, or to efface from it all that could be susceptible of allusion; and how much must I have effaced!

I assumed an aspect that was the reverse of that of inquietude. I wrote to the minister of the king's household, the count de Saint Florentin, to say that I was on the point of publishing a work, the subject of which seemed worthy to interest the heart of the king; that I was ardently desirous of his majesty's permission to dedicate it to him; and that in giving it to him (the minister) to examine, I would entreat him in person to solicit this favour for me. For this purpose, I begged a moment's audience of the count; which he granted.

In confiding my manuscript to the count, I confessed there was one chapter with which fanatic theologians might probably be dissatisfied. "It is very much to my interest then," said I, "that this secret should not be disclosed; and I entreat you, count, not to suffer my manuscript to leave your closet." As he had some friendship for me, he readily gave me his promise; which he kept. But, a few days afterwards, returning me the book, which he had either read or had employed some one to read, he told me that the religion of Belisarius would not suit the taste of the theologians: that my work would probably be censured by them; and that, for

that reason only, he dared not propose to the king to accept the dedication. On which I entreated him to keep my secret, and I withdrew satisfied.

What indeed was my object? To have at court a witness of the intention I had expressed of dedicating my work to the king; and, consequently, a proof that nothing was more distant from my thoughts than to write a satire on his reign; which was the simple truth. Armed with this defence, I was once more tranquil, on that score. But I had to pass under the eyes of a censor; and, instead of one, I had two given me; the literary censor not daring to take on himself to approve what regarded theology.

'Belisarius' was now submitted to the examination of a doctor of the Sorbonne. His name was Chevrier. A week after I had sent him my work, I called on him. When returning it, he was loud in its praises; but, when I cast my eyes on the last sheet, I did not see his approbation. "Have then the kindness," said I, "just to write two words here." His answer was a smile. "What! sir," I urged, "do you not approve it?"—"No, sir; God forbid!" answered he, mildly.—"And may I at least know what you find in it so censurable?"—"Very little in detail, but much on the whole; and the author knows too well in what spirit he has written his book, to require that I should affix my approbation." I pressed him to explain himself. "No, sir," said he, "you understand me perfectly; I understand you as well; let us not lose time by any discussion; but seek another censor." Fortunately, I found one who was less difficult, and 'Belisarius' was printed.

As soon as it appeared, the Sorbonne was in an uproar; and the wise doctors resolved, in full counsel, to subject it to their censure. To many people, this censure was a formidable thing; and several of my friends were of the number. The alarm spread; and they advised me to appease, if it were possible,

the fury of these doctors; but other friends, more firm, more jealous of my philosophical honour, exhorted me not to bend. I encouraged both, told my secret to neither, and began by listening attentively to the public.

My book sold rapidly; the first edition of it was sold off; I pressed forward the second, I hastened the third. There were nine thousand copies of it sold, before the Sorbonne had extracted from it what they had determined to censure; and, thanks to the noise these doctors made about the fifteenth chapter, no other was mentioned: it was to me like the tail of Alcibiades' dog. I rejoiced to see how essentially they served me, by thus diverting attention. My part was to appear neither feeble nor mutinous, and to gain time, in order that the editions of my book might multiply and spread through Europe. I therefore kept myself on the defensive, without the air of fearing the Sorbonne, or that of braving it; when an abbé, who has himself had powerful enemies to combat, the abbé Georgel, came to invite me to accept the archbishop as a mediator; assuring me, that if I would call on him, I should be well received, and that he knew he was disposed to negotiate a pacific accommodation with the theologians in my behalf. Nothing could accord better with my plan than conciliatory advances. I went to the prelate, who received me with a paternal air, calling me always 'My dear Mr Marmontel.' I was touched with the kindness which these gentle words seemed to express. I have since learned that it was his manner of being gracious, when he spoke to the lower class of the people.

I assured him of my good faith, of my respect for religion, of the desire I had not to leave any doubt concerning my doctrine, or that of my book; and only asked him as a favour, to be admitted to explain myself, before him and his doctors, on all the points which should appear culpable to them, in this work.

The part of mediator and of conciliator seemed to give him pleasure. He promised me to act, and he bade me call on the syndic of the Sorbonne, doctor Riballier, and explain myself to him personally.

I went to Riballier. Our conversations, and my correspondence with him are printed : I refer you to them. . .

The other doctors, who were assembled by the archbishop at his own house, whither I went to confer with them, were somewhat less uncivil than Riballier. But, in our conference, they too chose perpetually to change the passages, in order to pervert the sense. Armed with patience and moderation, I rectified the text, which they had altered, and explained to them my ideas, offering to insert these explanations in notes in my book ; and the archbishop was well satisfied with me ; but I cannot say the same of the other gentlemen. "All that you are telling us is very useless," concluded the abbé le Fèvre, an old caviller, who was only known in the school by the name of 'la Grande Cateau,' you must absolutely strike out the fifteenth chapter from your book ; the venom is there."

"If what you ask of me were possible," I answered, "perhaps I should do it for the love of peace. But, at present, there are forty thousand copies of my work scattered over Europe ; and in all the editions that have been published, and that which will soon appear, the fifteenth chapter is printed, and always will be printed. What would it now avail, to publish an edition of it without this chapter? No one would buy it thus mutilated ; it would be money lost to me and to my bookseller."—"Very well," said he, "then your book must be censured without mercy."—"True, without mercy, Mr abbé," I replied, "I expect no less, if it be you who are to dictate the censure. But his grace the archbishop will be my witness, that to appease you I have done all that you could reasonably require."

"Yes, my dear Mr Marmontel," said the archbishop, "on many points I have been pleased with your good faith and docility. But there is one article of which I require from you an authentic and formal recantation; it is that of toleration."—"If your grace," said I, "will be pleased to cast your eyes on a few lines that I have written this morning, you will there see, clearly explained, my personal opinion on that subject, and its motives." I presented to him the note that you will find printed at the end of 'Belisarius.' He read it in silence, and passed it to the doctors. "Ah!" said they, "common-place arguments a thousand times repeated, a thousand times confuted, that are but the refuse of the schools."—"You treat with very great contempt," said I, "the authority of the fathers of the church, and that of St Paul, by which my motives are supported." They answered, "that the writings of the fathers of the church were an arsenal in which all parties found arms; and that the passage of St Paul, which I quoted, proved nothing."

"Well then," I replied, "since your authority only, should be law, what do you ask of me?" "The right of the sword," they replied, "to exterminate heresy, irreligion, impiety, and bind all to the yoke of faith." I waited for them to come to that, in order to retire in good order, and intrench myself in a post where they could not attack me. *Præmunitum, atque ex omni parte causæ septum* (De Or. l. 3). I answered, "That the sword was among those 'carnal' weapons which St Paul had reproved, when he had said—*Arma militiæ nostræ non carnalia sunt;*" and at these words I was going to withdraw. The prelate detained me, and, pressing my hands between his, conjured me, in a pathetic tone, that was truly laughable, to subscribe to that atrocious dogma. "No, my lord," said I, "if I had signed it, I should think I had dipped my pen in blood; I should think I had approved all the cruelties committed in

the name of religion."—"You affix, then," said le Févre, with his doctorial insolence, "a great importance and a great authority to your opinion?" "I know, Mr abbé," I replied, "that my authority is nothing; but my conscience is something; and it is that, which, in the name of humanity, in the name of religion itself, forbids me to approve persecution. 'Defendenda religio est, non occidendo, sed moriendo; non sævitiâ, sed patientiâ si sanguine, si tormentis, si malo religionem defendere velis; jam non defendetur, sed polluetur atque violabitur.' This is the language of Lactantius, it is that of Tertullian, it is that of St Paul; and you will allow me to think that they were at least your equals."

"Come," said he to his brethren, "let's say no more. The gentleman chooses to be censured; he shall be so." Thus our conferences finished. What was precious to me, was the result I had drawn from them. The question here involved no little theological chicanery, in which I should have been exposed to the cavils of the school; it was a point of controversy, reduced to the most simple, the most striking, and the most precise terms. "They have wanted," I could say, "to make me recognise the right of forcing belief, of employing the sword, the torture, the scaffold, and the stake, for that purpose; they have wanted to make me approve those who preached the gospel, poniard in hand; and I have refused to subscribe to that abominable doctrine. It is for this that the abbé le Févre has declared that I should be censured without mercy. This recapitulation, which I was active in spreading about town, at court, in the parliament, and in the councils, rendered the Sorbonne odious: at the same time my friends exerted themselves to make it ridiculous, and for that I relied on them.

The first operation of the theologians was to extract from my work the passages they meant to

condemn. It was who should have the glory of discovering the greatest number of them. They picked them curiously, like pearls that each was emulous of adding to the store. After having collected thirty-seven of them, finding that number sufficient, they published the list under the title of 'Indiculus.' Voltaire added to it the epithet of 'Ridiculus.' Never did adjective and substantive agree better together; 'Indiculus Ridiculus' seemed made for each other; they remained inseparable. M. Turgot exposed the folly of the doctors in another way. As he was a good theologian himself, and a still better logician, he first established this evident and universally acknowledged principle, that, of two contradictory propositions, if one be false, the other is necessarily true. He then placed in opposition, in two parallel columns, the thirty-seven propositions reproved by the Sorbonne, and the thirty-seven contradictory ones, very exactly drawn out. There was no medium; in condemning the former, the theologians must absolutely adopt and profess the latter. Now, among these there was not a single one which was not revolting for its horror, or ridiculous for its absurdity. This beam of light, thrown judiciously on the doctrine of the Sorbonne, exposed it in its native deformity. In vain did they wish to withdraw their 'Indiculus;' it was too late; the blow was struck.

Voltaire undertook to make the public laugh at the syndic Riballier, and his scribe Cogé, a professor in that same Mazarin college of which Riballier was head-master, and who under his direction had written a slanderous libel against 'Belisarius' and myself. At the same time, with the shaft of ridicule which he handled so well, Voltaire launched with all his might on the whole Sorbonne; and with his little sheets that arrived from Geneva, and that circulated in Paris, amused the public at the expense of the doctors. Others of my friends, alike dexterous at

reasoning and ridicule, had also the friendship to undertake my defence; so that the decree of the theological tribunal was dishonoured and scouted before it had appeared.

While the Sorbonne, the fury of which these vexations increased, was labouring with all its power to render 'Belisarius' heretical, deistical, impious, "the enemy of the throne and the altar" (for these were her great war horses), I was continually receiving letters from the sovereigns of Europe, and from the most enlightened men, bestowing praises on my work, which they called the breviary of kings. The empress of Russia caused it to be translated into the Russian language, and dedicated to an archbishop of her empire. The empress queen of Hungary, in spite of the archbishop of Vienna, had ordered it to be printed in her states; she who was so severe with regard to those writings which attacked religion. I did not neglect, as you may suppose, to communicate its universal success to the court and to the parliament, and neither the one nor the other had any inclination to share the ridicule lavished on the Sorbonne.

Circumstances being thus favourable, and my presence no longer necessary at Paris, I employed the time, which the doctors took to fabricate their censure, in the sacred duties of friendship.

Madame Filleul was dying of a slow fever, occasioned by an acrimonious humour in the blood, and for which the most skilful of our physicians, Bouvart, had prescribed the waters and baths of Aix-la-Chapelle. The young countess de Séran accompanied her there; but, in the state in which the patient was, the assistance of a man was necessary to them. Their friend Bouret entreated me to be their companion. I considered it my duty to oblige them; and, as soon as they learned my answer, madame de Séran wrote me this note:—

"Is it really true that you intend going with us to

the waters? I can scarcely believe it, though it is my greatest wish. I dare not indulge the hope, which your occupations, your affairs, and your pleasures, all forbid. Assure me of it yourself, if you wish I should be convinced; and, if you do, believe me, I shall esteem this mark of friendship as one of the greatest that can be given. Madame Filleul dares not flatter herself more than I. But you would perhaps be determined to comply by the desire she shows, and the gratitude she expresses."

I set off with them. Madame Filleul was so ill, and madame de Séran was so persuaded that her friend would die on the road, that she cautioned me to take mourning with me. Arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle with this courageous woman, who, with scarcely a breath of life, did not cease still to smile at the gaiety we affected, the physician of the place was consulted; he found her too much enfeebled to support the bath, and began by making her try the waters very gently. The effect of their virtue was such, that the eruption of the humours having restored the patient to life, in a few days she regained strength, and was capable of supporting the bath. A prodigious change was then operated, as by miracle. The eruption was complete over the whole body; and the fair patient, feeling herself re-animated, went alone, walked out, and made us admire the progress of her recovery, appetite, and strength. Alas! in spite of our entreaties and remonstrances, she abused this prompt convalescence, by refusing to continue the gentle regimen that was prescribed: still, in spite of her intemperance, she would have been saved, had it not been for the fatal imprudence she committed, without our knowledge, just as her recovery was completed.

M. de Marigny, whose sister was dead, and who, wishing to indulge his taste and secure his happiness, had married the eldest daughter of madame Filleul, the idol of us all, the beautiful, the intelligent, the

charming Julie; yielding to the desire his wife expressed of coming to see her mother, brought her to us, and, accompanied by the celebrated designer Cochin, at the same time made a journey through Holland and Brabant, in order to see the pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools.

I have already given you the character of this worthy, interesting, and unhappy man. All the charms that can be wished for in a young woman, whether in person or in mind, disposition, sweetness, ingenuousness, kindness, gaiety, abundant wit, and sound reason, each cultivated with the greatest care, were united in his young wife. But, tormented as he was by a melancholy self-love, he had scarcely married her when he chose to be jealous of the tenderness she entertained for her mother, and of the friendship, which, from her infancy, had subsisted between her and madame de Séran. He witnessed this mutual sensibility on their seeing each other again; but he dissembled the vexation it gave him, and the little time he passed with us was obscured by no cloud. He even expressed affectionate feelings for madame Filleul. "I leave our dear Julie with you," said he; "it is very right that she should pay attention to the health of her mother. In a little time I shall return to take her back, and I hope I shall then find the health that is so precious to us all, perfectly re-established." He said some kind things too, to the countess de Séran, and left us all persuaded that he went away tranquil. But in him the least grain of ill-humour was like a leaven that quickly fermented, and whose sourness communicated itself to the whole mass of his ideas. From the moment he was alone, and abandoned to his own thoughts, he imagined his wife forgetting him by the side of her mother, and, more at liberty, rejoicing with us at her separation from him. "She had no love for him; it was not for him she lived; he was far from being what was dearest to her on earth:" such were the reflec-

tions that occupied his gloomy mind. He had more than once confided the sad secret to me. Yet his letters were very kind during the whole of his journey, and, till his return, we received nothing of what was passing in him. Let us leave him on his travels, and speak a little of the life we led at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Although madame Filleul, naturally lively, indulgent to her will and appetite, in spite of us, did all that could retard her recovery, the virtue of the waters and the baths did not fail to expel the acrimonious tendency with which she every day impregnated her blood, by spicy gravies and ragoûts, the seasoning of which to her was poison. As she boasted that she was cured, we, without being so well convinced as herself, believed it enough to congratulate ourselves. Our ladies then partook of all the pleasures of the place, in which I shared. After dinner, walking was the amusement; in the evening, dancing at the assembly of the Ridotto, where there was deep play; but we did not game. The dances were all English, very pretty, and well danced. It is to me a curious sight to see those chains of men and women of all the northern nations, Russians, Poles, Germans, and especially English, assembled and mixed together by the common attraction of pleasure. I need not tell you, that two French women of rare beauty, the elder of whom was but twenty, had only to show themselves to attract attention. In a morning then, while all were paying their court to them, either at home or on the public walk, I had some solitary hours. I employed them in literary labours. I wrote the 'Incas.'

At that time, two of our French bishops came to the waters, and took apartments in our neighbourhood. One of them, Broglie, bishop of Noyon, was an invalid; the other accompanied him: it was Marbœuf, bishop of Autun, who has since been minister. The author of the book which the Sorbonne was at that very moment censuring, was to them an object of curiosity.

They came to see me, and invited me to walk. I was well aware that these prelates wanted to wrestle with me; and, as the game pleased me, I willingly entered the ring.

They began, as you may suppose, by talking of Belisarius. They expected to find me terribly alarmed at the decree which the Sorbonne was about to fulminate against me, and were quite surprised to see me so tranquil under this anathema. "Belisarius," said I, "is an old soldier, an honest man, and a christian in his soul, loving his religion from his heart and with good faith; he believes all that the gospel teaches him, and only rejects what is not there. It is to the black phantoms of superstition, it is to the monstrous horrors of fanaticism, that Belisarius refuses credit. I have proposed to the Sorbonne to render this distinction evident in explanatory notes, which I would add to my book. This conciliatory proposal it has refused; it has required that the fifteenth chapter should be expunged from a work of which forty thousand copies are already sold: a puerile demand; for the mutilated edition would have been rejected as refuse, and would only have ruined me. Lastly, it has insisted that I should recognise the dogma of civil intolerance, the right of the sword, the right of proscription, of exile, of dungeons, poniards, torture, and the stake, in order to force belief in the religion of the lamb; and in the lamb of the gospel I have not chosen to recognise the tiger of the inquisition. I have adhered to the doctrine of Lactantius, of Tertullian, of St Paul, and to the spirit of the gospel. It is for this that the Sorbonne is actually occupied in fabricating a pitiless censure on Belisarius, Lactantius, Tertullian, St Paul, and on all who think like them. Take care of yourselves, my lords, for it is possible that you may be of the number."

"But why do philosophers," said the bishop of Autun, "presume to speak of theology?"—"Why

do theologians," replied I, "presume to tyrannize over mind, and to excite princes to employ torture in order to force belief? Are princes the judges on articles of religion and on the objects of faith?"—"Certainly not," he answered; "princes are not the judges."—"And you make them the executioners!"—"I know not," replied he, "why theologians should now be accused of a kind of persecution which they no longer exercise. Never did the church show more moderation in the use of its power."—"It is true, my lord," said I, "that she uses it more soberly; she has tempered it, in order to preserve it."—"Why then," insisted he, "choose this very time to attack her?"—"Because men do not write only for the moment in which they write," answered I; "it is to be feared that the future may resemble the past, and they seize the moment when the waters are low, to work at the mounds."—"Ah! the mounds!" said he: "'tis the pretended philosophers who break them down, and who aim at nothing less than the total destruction of religion."—"Leave to this charitable, this beneficent and peaceful religion its true character, and I dare assert," replied I, "that incredulity itself will not dare to attack it, and that impiety will be silent in its presence. 'Tis not its pure tenets, nor its morality, nor even its mysteries, that raise it enemies. 'Tis the violent and fanatic opinions with which a dark theology has mixed its doctrine; these are what make honest minds rebel. Let it be disengaged from this mixture, let it be purified, let it be brought back to its primitive sanctity; then will those who attack it be the public enemies of the wretches it consoles, of the oppressed it relieves, and of the feeble it supports."

"Say what you will," replied the bishop; "its doctrine is stedfast, the edifice is cemented, and we will never suffer a single stone of it to be displaced." I reminded him, "that the art of mining was carried to great perfection; that with a little powder very

high and very solid towers had been completely overthrown, and even the hardest rocks blown in pieces. Heaven forbid," added I, " that I should wish my presage to be accomplished! I sincerely love and revere, from the bottom of my heart, this consoling religion; but if ever it dies among us, theological fanaticism will alone be the cause of its death; fanaticism alone will have struck the mortal blow."

Then retiring a little from me, and speaking in a low voice to the bishop of Noyon, I thought I heard him say, " It will last longer than ourselves." He was mistaken. Turning again to me, " If you love religion," insisted he, " why join with those who meditate its ruin?"—" I only join with those," answered I, " who love it as I do, and who desire that it should show itself such as heaven gave it, pure, single, and unspotted,—*sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol . . .*"—He added, smiling, " *terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.*"—" Yes," replied I, " terrible to the wicked, to the fanatic, to the impious; but now only terrible with the arms that are its own, which are neither sword nor fire." Such nearly, was our first conversation.

Another time, as he perpetually recurred to his observation, that philosophers assumed too much liberty: " It is true, my lord," said I, " that they sometimes presume to perform very noble functions for you; but it is only when you will not deign to fulfil them yourselves."—" What functions?" asked he.—" Those of preaching publicly truths that are too rarely told to sovereigns, to their ministers, or to the flatterers that surround them. Since the exile of Fénélon, or, if you will, since that little course of touching morality given by the direction of Massillon, to Louis XV when a child,—lessons, alas! that were premature, and therefore useless,—have public vices and public crimes found in the priesthood a single courageous assailant?

In the pulpit, they dare indeed to rebuke trifling errors, and check common frailties; but the disastrous passions, the political scourges,—in a word, the moral scourges of human evils, who dares to attack? Who dares to encounter pride, ambition, vain-glory, false zeal, the fury of domination and usurpation? Who dares call them to account, before God and man, for the tears and blood of their numberless victims?" I then supposed a Chrysostom in the pulpit; and, in exposing the subjects that would invoke his eloquence, I was perhaps at that moment eloquent myself.

Be that as it may, my two prelates, after having felt my pulse two or three times, found my disease incurable; and one day, when showing them the manuscript of the 'Incas,' which was lying on my table, I said, "There is a work that will reduce your doctors to the alternative of burning the gospel, or of respecting in Las Casas, that apostle of the Indies, the same sentiments and the same doctrine that they condemn in 'Belisarius.'" They saw they could no longer hope anything from me: their zeal discouraged, or rather their curiosity satisfied, they left me the free disposal of time that would have been lost in discussion. The wish to make me a philosophical theologian, or to transform them to theological philosophers, was vain.

The labour, which my book of the 'Incas' still required, was interrupted in behalf of that of a memorial, in which I have pleaded the cause of the northern peasantry, and which is printed in the collection of my works.

I had just read in the newspapers, that, at the Economical Society at Petersburgh, an anonymous promoter of philosophical inquiry proposed a prize of a thousand ducats for the best work on this question:—"Is it advantageous to a state that the peasant should be a proprietor of land, or that he

should have only moveable goods? And how far should the right of the peasant over this property extend, for the advantage of the state?"

I concluded that this anonymous promoter of inquiry was the empress of Russia herself; and since on this great object she was desirous that the truth should be known in her states, I resolved to show it whole and entire. One of the Russian ministers, M. de Saldern, had come to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters. I frequently saw him, and he spoke to me of the affairs of the north with as much openness of heart as a prudent minister is permitted to speak. It was through him that my memorial reached its destination. It did not obtain the prize, and I foresaw that it would not; but it made its impression, and of this I received testimonies. Thus my solitary hours were usefully occupied. But an object not less interesting to me than my literary occupation, and, to say the truth, still more attractive, was the conversation of my three ladies, all three of different dispositions, but so analogous, that their colours harmonized and melted into each other like those of the rainbow. Thoughts and sentiments thus harmoniously blended make the charm of conversation. Unity of sentiment begins by being agreeable and finishes by being vapid. It is for this reason madame Filleul used to say that she loved contrariety; that nothing else was natural and sincere; that nature had never made two things equal, neither two eggs, two leaves, two minds, nor two tempers; and that, wherever we thought we saw a perfect likeness of sentiments and opinions, there was dissimulation and complaisance on the one side or the other, and often on both.

One of the three, madame de Seran, had made me her confidant, and the secrets with which she entrusted me were of such a nature as to make our private conversations very interesting. They related to the facility with which she might have succeeded

madame de Pompadour, had she been ambitious of that distinction. She was in continual correspondence with the king; he wrote to her by every post; and these letters and the answers were all shown to me. I must tell you how this little romance was contrived.

Madame de Séran was the daughter of a M. de Bulioud, a man of family, without fortune, and formerly governor of the pages of the duke of Orleans. By a most strange fatality, and which I cannot explain, this young lady, from the age of fifteen, had been the object of her father's violent and sombre spleen, and of her mother's aversion. Beautiful as an angel, and even more interesting for the charm of her gentle temper and simple innocence, than for the brilliancy of her beauty, she did but weep and lament her sad and cruel fate, when her father suddenly resolved to marry her, giving her as her dowry his place of governor of the pages, which he resigned to his son-in-law. This husband whom he presented to her was likewise of an ancient family, but with no other property than a little estate in Normandy. To be poor was a trifle. M. de Séran was ugly, and of a most forbidding ugliness; red-haired, ill-made, with only one eye, and in that one a cataract; in other respects the best and most honourable of men. When he was presented to our beautiful Adélaide, she turned pale with horror, and her heart shrunk back with disgust and repugnance. The presence of her relations made her endeavour to conceal this first impression from him, as much as possible; but M. de Séran perceived it. He requested he might be allowed to pass a few moments tête-à-tête with her; and, when they were left alone, "Mademoiselle," said he, "you find me very ugly, and my ugliness frightens you. I perceive it; you may confess it without artifice. If you think that this repugnance is invincible, tell me so confidently as to your friend: your

secret shall be kept; I will take the rupture on myself, and your parents shall know nothing of the confession you shall have made me. At the same time, were it possible to render these natural defects supportable to you in a husband, and were nothing requisite for that purpose but the cares and attentive devotion of a sincere and tender friendship, you might expect them from the heart of an honest man, who would be grateful to you through life for not having rejected him. Consult your own feelings, and then answer me: you are perfectly free."

Adélaide was so wretched; she saw in this honourable man so sincere a desire of procuring her a happier lot, that she hoped she should have the courage to accept him. "Sir," said she, "what I have just heard, with the character of kindness and probity, which your language bespeaks, inspires the sincerest esteem. Give me a few hours for reflection, and come for your answer tomorrow."

Nothing less was requisite than the most urgent counsels of reason and present unhappiness to determine her; but the esteem she felt for M. de Séran at length triumphed over all her repugnance. "Sir," said she, on seeing him again, "I am persuaded that ugliness, as well as beauty, is soon forgotten; and that the only qualities, the impression of which is not enfeebled by habit, and whose value is every day more intimately felt, are those of the heart. Such I find in you; I desire no others; and I confide to your honour the care of my happiness. It will be grateful to me to contribute to yours."

Thus mademoiselle de Bulioud was married before she had completed her fifteenth year; and M. de Séran was to her all that he had promised to be. I do not say that this union had the charm of love; but it had the sweets of peace, of friendship, and of the tenderest esteem. The husband, without inquietude, beheld his wife surrounded by adorers; and the wife, by her correct and modest conduct,

honoured, in the eyes of the public, the confidence of her husband.

Yet it was impossible to see, hear, and especially to know her, without wishing her a happier fate. Her friends undertook to put her in the road to fortune; and, on the marriage of the duke de Chartres, they thought of placing her honourably in the service of the young princess. But, for that purpose, a pure and noble race of ancestors did not suffice; it was necessary besides to be of the number of those ladies who had been presented to the king: such was the etiquette of the court of Orleans. This honour was reserved to the families that had been noble four hundred years, and by that title she had a right to aspire to it; which right was granted. But the king, after having listened more attentively to the eulogy of her beauty than to the testimonies of her rank, gave his consent, on condition that, after her presentation she should go to thank him; a private condition for M. de Séran, and which his wife herself did not expect; for, speaking sincerely, she was only ambitious of the place that was promised her at the court of the duke of Orleans; and, when she had to go alone to the rendezvous the king had appointed in his private apartment, to thank him tête-à-tête, I know she trembled. However, she went, and I arrived at madame Filleul's as they were waiting her return. It was there that I learnt what I have just related; and I plainly saw that, as to her friends, the place at the court of Orleans had been only a specious pretext, and that this rendezvous was their important object.

I had the pleasure of seeing them build their airy castles of ambition: the young countess was all-powerful, the king and the court were at her feet, all her friends were to be loaded with benefits and favours. I was honoured with her confidence, and, through her exciting and persuading the king to do all the good I should desire, no prospect could be

fairer. They were expecting the young and lovely conqueress; the minutes were counted, they were dying with impatience to see her enter; and yet they were very glad she did not come too soon.

At last she returns, and tells us the history of her visit. A page of the chamber waited for her at the gate of the chapel; it was quite dark; she had gone up to the private apartment of the king by a back staircase. He had not made her wait; he had approached her with an engaging air, had taken her hands, had kissed them respectfully, and, seeing her fearful, had encouraged her by gentle words and a look full of kindness. Afterwards he had made her sit down oppposite to him, had congratulated her on the success of her presentation, told her that nothing so beautiful had appeared at his court, and that every one was of the same opinion. "It is then very true, sire, answered I," said she in narration, "that happiness embellishes: and, if so, I ought at this moment to be still more beautiful."—"You are beautiful indeed, he replied, taking my hands and pressing them gently between his own, which trembled. After a moment's silence, in which his eyes only spoke, he asked me what place I should be ambitious of obtaining at his court. I answered him,—The place of the princess d'Armagnac." She was an old friend of the king's, who had just died. "Ah! you are very young, answered he, to replace a friend who was present at my birth, who has held me on her knees, and whom I have loved from my cradle. Time is requisite, madam, to gain my confidence. I have been so often deceived!—Oh! I will not deceive you, said I; and if, to merit the distinguished title of your friend, time only be necessary, I have that to give you."—This language, in a girl of twenty, surprised, but did not displease him. Changing the conversation, he asked me if I thought his private rooms tastefully furnished I answered, "I should like them better in blue."—

As blue is his colour, this answer flattered him. I added, that in every other respect I thought them charming.—If you be pleased with them, said he, I hope you will sometimes return to them; for instance, every Sunday at this same hour. I assured him that I should seize every opportunity of paying my court to him. He then quitted me, to go and sup with his children. He has given me a rendezvous for next Sunday at the same hour. I therefore announce to you all that I shall be the friend of the king, and that I shall be nothing more."

As this resolution was not only in her head but in her heart, she kept it; of which I had a proof. At the second rendezvous, she found the drawing-room furnished in blue, as she wished it had been; an attention that was very delicate. She used to go there every Sunday; and through Janel, the postmaster-general, she frequently received, in the intervals between these private meetings, letters from the king: but in these letters, which I have seen, he never overstepped the bounds of a respectful gallantry; and the answers she made to them, full of wit, grace, and delicacy, flattered his vanity without ever flattering his love. Madame de Séran had a fund of that natural and flowing wit, the ingenuousness and simplicity of which enchant those who have most of it, and please those who have least. The vanity of the king was not easily made gentle and familiar, yet he was soon at his ease with her. After their first rendezvous, the time that preceded the royal supper had appeared to the king so short, that he entreated her to have the kindness to wait his return, and to consent that supper should be served up to her, promising to abridge his own as much as possible, in order that he might pass a few moments longer with her. As he had a small library in this private apartment, she one evening asked him for some pleasant book to occupy her in his absence; and the king leaving the choice to her, she had the attention and kindness to

name 'Belisarius.' "I have it not," answered the king; "'tis the only one of his works that Marmontel has not given me."—"Choose then yourself, sire," said she, "some book that may amuse or interest me." "I hope," he replied, "that this will interest you;" and he gave her a collection of verses written on his recovery. It was for her, after supper, an ample and rich fund of praises, that were the more flattering because wit had there made itself subservient to feeling.

Had the king been young, and animated by that fire that gives and finds an excuse for boldness, I would not have sworn that the young and prudent countess would always have passed that slippery point, the tête-à-tête, without peril. But a feeble, timid, languid desire, such as it was in a man grown old by pleasures rather than by years, wanted to be encouraged; and an air of decorum, reserve, and modesty, was not what he required. Of this our young friend was well aware. "Therefore," used she to say, "he will never dare to be more than my friend; of that I am sure, and have no inclination to recognise him by any other title."

One day, however, she spoke to him of his mistresses, and asked him if he had ever been really in love. He answered that he had, with madame de Châteauroux. "And with madame de Pompadour?" "No," said he; "I never had any love for her."—"Yet you kept her as long as she lived."—"Yes, because, had I discarded her, it would have broken her heart." This ingenuousness was not very seducing. And madame de Séran was thus never tempted to succeed a woman whom the king had kept only for pity's sake.

She was on these terms with him, when she and I both quitted everything to accompany our sick and dying friend to the waters.

Madame de Séran regularly received by every courier a letter from the king, through the interposi-

tion of Janel; I was her confidant, and these letters were shown to me; I saw the answers too; I enjoyed the same confidence during the whole of their correspondence, and I am an eye-witness of the chastity of this connexion. The letters of the king were filled with expressions that left nothing equivocal. "You are but too respectable! Permit me to kiss your hands at this distance at least, allow me to embrace you." He spoke to her of the death of the dauphin, whom he called *our saintly hero*, and told her that he wanted the consolations she would have afforded him at so cruel a loss. Such was his language, and he would not have had the complaisance to have thus disguised the style of a successful lover. I shall have occasion to speak again of these letters of the king, and of the impression they made on a mind less easy to persuade than mine. In the meantime, I observed here, that the king, at his age, was not sorry to have an opportunity of tasting the charms of sentimental love, which was the more inviting and flattering because it was new to him; and because, without compromising his self-love, it touched him in the most delicate part.

Although the noise that 'Belisarius' then made, and the celebrity that the 'Moral Tales' had acquired in the north of Europe, might already have made me somewhat remarkable among the crowd in which I lived, an adventure, that was honourable enough for me, drew on me new attention. One morning, in passing by the principal inn where the Ridotto was held, I heard some one call me by name. I raise my head, and see from the window from which the voice proceeded, a man, who exclaims, "*'Tis he,*" and disappears. I had not recognised him; but he instantly came from the inn, and ran to embrace me, saying, "What a happy accident to meet you here!" It was the prince of Brunswick. "Come," added he, "let me present you to my wife; she will be very happy to see you." On entering her room, "Madame,"

said he, "you were very desirous of knowing the author of 'Belisarius' and the 'Moral Tales.' Here he is: I present him to you." Her royal highness, the sister of the king of England, received me with the same joy and cordiality with which the prince introduced me. At that moment, the magistrates of the city were waiting for them at the fountain, in order to open it before them, and show them the concretion of pure sulphur, which was formed in stalactites under the stone of the reservoir; a kind of honour that was paid only to people of the first distinction. "Go there without me," said the prince to his wife; "I shall pass the time more agreeably with Marmontel." I would have declined this favour; but was obliged to remain with him, tête-à-tête, at least a quarter of an hour; and he employed it in talking to me with enthusiasm of the literary men he had seen in Paris, and of the happy moments he had passed in their company. There the afflicting idea was pressed on his mind that all hope of enticing us out of our country must be abandoned, and that no sovereign in Europe was powerful enough to afford any compensation for the happiness of living together in social intercourse.

At last, to persuade him to go to the fountain, I was obliged to express a wish of seeing it myself, and I had the honour to accompany him there.

As they were to leave Aix-la-Chapelle on the following day, the princess had the kindness to invite me to go and pass the evening with them at the Ridotto. At the moment I arrived she was dancing, and she instantly quitted the dance, of which she was passionately fond, to come and converse with me. Till one in the morning, she, her maid of honour (Miss Stuart), and I, kept ourselves in a corner, talking of all that this charming princess was desirous to hear of me. The flattery of her kindness may have deceived me, but I thought her natural manner highly intelligent and charming. "How

then have you been educated," I asked "to have in your character that adorable simplicity? How little you resemble the persons I have seen of your rank!" —"It is, that at your court," answered Miss Stuart, "princes are instructed how to govern, and at ours how to please."

The princess, before she left me, had the goodness to request I would promise her to make a journey to England, while she herself should be there. "I will receive you," said she; "and it shall be I who will present you to the king, my brother." I promised her that, unless some insurmountable obstacle prevented me, I would go to pay my court to her in London; and I took leave of her and her worthy husband, sensibly affected by the marks of kindness I had received from them. I was not the prouder for this favour; but in the circle at the Ridotto I thought I perceived that I was more respected. There may seem a vanity, my dear children, in detailing these circumstances; but it is very right you should learn that, having some talent, joined with polite and unaffected manners, you may every where command esteem.

Although madame de Séran and madame de Marigny were not sick, they frequently indulged in the pleasure of bathing; and I used to hear them talk of their young bathing girl, as of a model that sculptors would have been rejoiced to possess, for the statue of Atalanta, Diana, or even of Venus. As I I had a taste for the arts, I was curious to know the model they praised so highly. I went to see the young bathing maid. I found her beautiful indeed, and almost as prudent as beautiful. We became acquainted. One of her fair friends, who was soon mine, used to permit us occasionally to go with her and take some refreshment in her little garden. This humble society, in drawing me nearer to simple nature, furnished me with philosophy enough to keep my mind at peace in the company of my two

young ladies; a situation that otherwise would not have ceased to be exceedingly painful. Besides, these trifling repasts were not expensive to me; some nice little cakes, with a bottle of Moselle wine, were all they cost me; and madame Filleul, whom I had admitted to my confidence, secretly gave me a few small flasks of Malaga, which her bathing girl and I drank to her health.

Alas! that health, which, in spite of all her intemperance, did not not cease to improve by the marvellous virtue of the baths, soon experienced a fatal revolution.

M. de Marigny returned from his journey into Holland; he intended to take his wife back with him to Paris. But, madame Filleul having expressed to him the pleasure he would give her by leaving her daughter with her till the end of the bathing season, a period that was not distant, he appeared to yield willingly to the wishes of a sick mother; and, as he was desirous of seeing Spa on his return, our young ladies resolved to accompany him there; they all entreated me to make this little excursion. I know not what presentiment made me insist on keeping madame Filleul company; but she herself, persisting in the wish to be left alone, obliged me to go. This unfortunate journey announced itself ill. Two Polish gentlemen, who were acquainted with our young ladies, MM. Regewski, thought it would be gallant to accompany them on horseback: M. de Marigny no sooner saw them galloping by the side of the carriage than he fell into a sombre melancholy; and from that momont the cloud that arose in his mind only blackened and became more stormy.

However, on arriving at Spa, he went with us to the assembly of the Ridotto; but the more brilliant he found it, the more was he struck with the species of emotion that our young ladies had excited the instant they showed themselves there, and the more gloomy was his chagrin. Yet he would not

incur the humiliation of showing himself jealous. He chose a more vague pretext.

At supper, as he was melancholy and silent, madame de Séran and his wife having pressed him to say what was the cause of his sadness, he at last answered, that he saw too well his presence was importunate; that, after all he had done to be loved, he was not so; that he was hated, detested; that the request which madame Filleul had made him was preconcerted; that they only wished to be rid of him; that they had accompanied him to Spa only to amuse themselves there; but that he was not the dupe of this specious artifice, for he very well knew his wife was longing for his departure. She spoke to him with gentleness, telling him he was unjust; that, if he had expressed the least objection to leave her with her mother, they would neither of them have felt any inclination to abuse his complaisance; that, besides, though she had left her trunks at Aix-la-Chapelle, she was resolved to go with him. "No, madame," said he, "stay; it is now too late; I desire no sacrifices."—"Most certainly," replied she, "it is a sacrifice to quit my mother in the state in which she is; but there is none that I am not ready to make for you."—"I will accept none," repeated he, rising from table. Madame de Séran endeavoured to appease him; but he replied, "To you, madame, I do not address myself. I should have too much to say to you. I only entreat you not to interfere in what passes between madame de Marigny and myself." He quitted the room abruptly, and left us all three in consternation. After a moment's consultation, we were of opinion that his wife should go to him. She was pale, and in tears. In that situation, she would have moved the heart of a tiger; but he, for fear of being vanquished, had commanded his servants not to suffer her to enter his room, and had ordered post-horses to be put to his chaise at the break of day.

No master was ever so punctually obeyed as he. His valet-de-chambre represented, that if he suffered madame de Marigny to enter the room, he should be turned off instantly, and that his master, in his anger, would be capable of the greatest excesses. We hoped that sleep would calm him a little, and I only requested that they would come to inform me the instant he awoke.

I had not slept at all; I was not even undressed, when they came to tell me he was getting up. I went to him, and in the most moving manner represented to him the state in which he was leaving his wife. "'Tis all pretence," said he; "you know nothing of women; I know them to my sorrow." The presence of his servant imposed silence on me; and when he was ready to set off: "Farewell, my dear friend," said he, pressing my hand; "pity the most wretched of men! Farewell!"—and, with an air with which he would have mounted the scaffold, got into his carriage and was driven off.

The grief of madame de Marigny then changed into indignation: "He disgusts me," said she; "he wishes to make me rebel, and will succeed. I was disposed to love him, heaven is my witness; I would have made it my delight, my glory to render him happy; but he will not be so; he has sworn to force me to hate him." We passed three days at Spa; the young ladies in dissipating the sadness that oppressed their hearts, and I in reflecting on the melancholy consequences that might ensue from this excursion. I did not foresee the still more cruel affliction it was to cause us.

In proportion as the blood of our patient was relieved from the impurities it contained, a slight scorbutic humour perpetually formed itself on her skin, and over her whole person; this humour dried itself to dust, and fell away. It was that which had saved her; and from the moment that the impurity of the blood had thus spread itself over the

surface of the body, the physician had considered her as recalled to life. But she, who was disgusted with this affection of the skin, and who found its cure too slow, wanted to accelerate it; and choosing for that purpose the time of our absence, she had plastered her whole body over with cerate. The transpiration of this humour instantly ceased; it returned into the blood; and we found the patient in a more desperate state than ever. She wished to return to Paris; we brought her back with difficulty, and from that time she did but languish.

In order that she might repose on her journey, we came but a few leagues each day. At Liège, where we had slept, a man of respectable appearance entered my room in the morning, and said, "Sir, I learnt yesterday evening that you were here. I am under great obligations to you. I come to thank you for them. My name is Bassompierre. I am a bookseller and printer in this city; I print your works, for which I have a great sale throughout Germany. I have already printed four large editions of your 'Moral Tales;' I am now upon the third edition of 'Belisarius.'"—"What! sir," said I, interrupting him, "do you steal from me the fruit of my labour, and come to boast of it!"—"Oh!" replied he, "your privileges do not extend to us. Liège is a free town. We have a right to print whatever is good; in that our trade consists. If your works be not pirated in France, where you are privileged, you will be rich enough. Do me, then, the favour to come and breakfast at my house. You shall see one of the finest printing-offices in Europe, and you will be pleased with the manner in which your works are executed." To see this exhibition I went to Bassompierre's house. The breakfast that awaited me consisted of cold meats and fish. The whole family gave me a most friendly reception. I was at table between Bassompierre's two daughters, who, as they filled my glass with Rhenish wine, said, "Monsieur Marmontel, what

are you going to do at Paris, where you are persecuted? Stay here, live at my father's; we have an excellent chamber to give you. We will take care of you. You shall compose quite at your ease, and what you may have written one day shall be printed the next." I was almost tempted to accept the offer. Bassompierre, to indemnify me for his larceny, made me a present of the little edition of Molière, which you now read: that book cost me twelve hundred guineas.

At Brussels I had the curiosity to see a rich cabinet of pictures. The amateur who had formed it was, (I believe) one chevalier Vérule, a melancholy and splenetic man, who, persuaded that a breath of air would be mortal to him, kept himself shut up in his room as in a box. His cabinet was open only to persons of distinction, or to famous connoisseurs. I enjoyed neither of these titles. But, after I had understood his character, I hoped to induce him to receive me favourably. I was introduced to him. "Be not surprised, sir," said I, "that a man of letters, who is acquainted at Paris with the most celebrated artists, and with the lovers of the fine arts, should be desirous of having it in his power to give them news of a man for whom they all entertain the highest esteem. They will know that I have passed through Brussels, and they would not pardon my having been there without having seen you, and without having inquired after your health."—"Ah! sir," answered he, "my health is very bad;" and then entered into details of his nervous complaints, his vapours, and the extreme weakness of his organs. I listened; and, after having seriously recommended him to take care of himself, was going to take my leave. "What! sir," said he, "will you go away without just casting your eyes on my pictures?"—"I am no connoisseur," said I, "and am not worth the trouble you would have to show them." At the same time I suffered him to conduct me to his trea-

sure; and the first picture that he bade me notice was a very beautiful landscape, by Berghem. "Ah!" exclaimed I, "at first I took that picture for a window, through which I saw the country, and those fine cattle."—"That," said he with rapture, "is the finest eulogy that has been passed on this picture." I expressed the same surprise and the same illusion on approaching a cabinet that contained a picture by Rubens, representing his three wives, painted as large as life; and thus, successively, I appeared to receieve from his most remarkable pictures the impression of truth. He was indefatigable in renewing my surprises: I let him enjoy them as much as he chose; so that at last he told me my instinct judged his pictures better than the acquired knowledge of many others, who called themselves connoisseurs, and who examine everything, but who feel nothing.

At Valenciennes, a curiosity of another kind had nearly proved very unfortunate. As we had arrived early in that city, I thought I might employ the remainder of the evening in walking on the ramparts, to see the fortifications. While I was surveying them, an officer of the guard, at the head of his troop, came to me and roughly said, "What are you doing there?" "I am walking and looking at these noble fortifications."—"Don't you know that it is forbidden to walk on these ramparts and examine the works?"—"I certainly did not know it."—"Where did you come from?"—"Paris."—"Who are you?"—"A man of letters, who, having never seen a fortified place except in books, was curious to see one in reality."—"Where do you lodge?" I named the inn, and the three ladies that I accompanied: I told my name too. "You have the air of being sincere," said he at last; "go back." I did not make him repeat the order.

As I was relating my adventure to our ladies, the commandant of the town entered the room; luckily,

he had been particularly patronised by madame de Pompadour, and came to pay his respects to the sister-in-law of his benefactress. I found him acquainted with what had just happened to me. He told me that I might consider myself very fortunate that they had not imprisoned me. But he offered to conduct me himself the next morning to see all the exterior of the place. I accepted his offer with gratitude, and I had the pleasure of walking round the town leisurely, and without danger.

A short time after our return to Paris, we had the misfortune to lose madame Filleul. Never was a death more courageous and more tranquil. She was a woman of a very singular disposition, full of wit, and of a wit, the penetration, vivacity and acuteness of which resembled the look of the eagle; she had nothing that savoured either of trick or artifice. I never saw her indulge either in the illusions or in the vanities of her sex: she had its tastes, but they were simple, natural, without whim and without caprice. Her mind was lively, but calm; with feeling enough to be affectionate and beneficent, but not sufficient to be the sport of her passions. Her inclinations were gentle, peaceful, and constant; she indulged them without weakness, but never to excess; she considered the occurrences of life, and the scenes they compose, as a game which she liked to see played, and at which, she said, it was necessary occasionally to know how to play ourselves, without being either knave or dupe. It was thus she conducted herself, with very little attention to her own interests, and with great ardour for those of her friends. As to events, nothing astonished her; and in every situation she had the advantage of coolness and prudence. I have no doubt that it was she who had put madame de Séran in the road to fortune; but she only smiled at the ingenuousness of the young countess, when she heard her say that even in a king, were he king of the world, she never would have a lover whom

she could not love. "You shall have kings made for you," she used to answer, "after the model of your love; you shall have intrigues in which there is nothing but enjoyment."—"Indeed," said the young countess, "you would all wish my power to be unbounded, that you might only have to ask me for whatever you desire; but, while you would be amusing yourselves here, I should be sadly wearied in my elevated sphere, and should die with grief, like madame de Pompadour."—"Well, my dear girl, let us be poor," answered madame Filleul: "in your place I should be as foolish as yourself;" and in the evening we gaily eat our frugal supper, laughing at human grandeur. Thus, without being concerned at the view and approach of death, she smiled on her friend as she bade her farewell, and life ended in a gentle swoon.

On my return from Aix-la-Chapelle, I found the censure of the Sorbonne pasted up at the door of the Academy, and at that of madame Geoffrin. But the Swiss of the Louvre seemed to have agreed to daub it with their brooms. The censure and the mandate of the archbishop were read from the pulpit in all the churches of Paris, and they were despised by every class of people. Neither the court nor the parliament took any part in this business. I was only advised to be silent, and 'Belisarius' continued to be printed and sold with the privilege of the king. But an event more afflicting than the decrees of the Sorbonne awaited me on my arrival at Maisons; it was there that I needed all my courage.

I have mentioned a young niece of madame Gaulard, and the pleasing custom I had formed of passing the gay season of the year, and sometimes even the winter, in that society. This custom, between the niece and me, was changed to love. We were neither of us rich; but, with the credit of our friend Bouret, nothing was more easy than to pro-

cure for myself, either at Paris or in the provinces, some place lucrative enough to provide us with every comfort we desired. We had confided our desires and our hopes to no one. But, from the liberty we were allowed together, and from the tranquil confidence with which madame Gaulard herself observed our intimacy, we did not doubt that she would be favourable to us. Bouret, above all, seemed to be so pleased in witnessing our friendship, that I thought myself sure of him; and as soon as I should have brought back his intimate friend in good health, as I hoped, I intended to entreat him to seriously interest himself in behalf of my fortune and marriage.

But madame Gaulard had a cousin whom she tenderly loved, and whose fortune was made. This cousin, who was also that of the young niece, fell in love with her, asked her in marriage during my absence, and obtained her without difficulty. She, too young and timid to declare any other attachment, so far engaged herself that I arrived only to be present at the ceremony. They were waiting for a dispensation from Rome to go to the altar; and I, as the intimate friend of the house, was to be the witness and confidant of all. My situation was painful; that of the young lady was scarcely less so; and however tranquil we had resolved to appear, it is difficult to me to conceive that our sadness did not betray us to the eyes of the aunt and of the future husband. Happily, the liberty of the country permitted us to say to each other a few consoling words, and mutually to inspire each other with the courage we so much wanted. In such a case, love in despair saves itself in the arms of friendship: that was our refuge. We promised each other at least to be friends through life; and while our hearts were suffered thus to afford mutual comfort, we were not unhappy. But, till the fatal dispensation should

arrive from Rome, it was prudent that I should absent myself; and I had a favourable opportunity for so doing.

BOOK IX.

M. DE MARIGNY, at peace with his wife, abridged his visit to Fontainbleau, in order to go with her to Ménars. He was desirous that I should accompany them. His wife entreated me still more earnestly than he. As the confidant of their disputes, I hoped to be able to contribute to their reconciliation; and my gratitude to him, as much as my friendship for her, prompted me to accept their offer. "You cannot think, sir," said he in his letter from Fontainbleau of the 12th of October 1767, "what pleasure you give me by going to Ménars. I may be permitted to be somewhat jealous of that which madame de Marigny expresses."

My presence was not useless to them in this journey. More than one cloud was raised between them, which it was requisite to dissipate. Even on the road, while speaking in praise of his wife, M. de Marigny wanted to attribute her faults to the countess de Séran. But his young wife, who had some dignity, refused to admit that excuse. "I have committed no faults that should affect you," said she, "and you are unjust to attribute any to me; but you are still more so to load my friend with them." And when a few words that were too bitter, and too inconsiderate, escaped him against this absent friend, "Respect her, sir," said his wife; "you owe it to her, you owe it to me; and I must tell you that you will never abuse her without wounding me to the heart."

It is true that, in the intimacy of these two women, all the care of madame de Séran was employed in inspiring her friend with gentleness, complaisance, and, if it were possible, with love for a man who, she told her, had amiable qualities, and who, if his violence were tempered and his sourness sweetened, would make a very good husband.

A little strength and dignity of mind were necessary with a man who, possessed of frankness and courage, esteemed in the characters of others what was analogous to his own. The tone we observed with him was therefore that of mild but firm reason; and I fulfilled so well my office of conciliator, that, on quitting them, I left them in perfect harmony. But I had seen enough of them, and above all I had learnt enough from the confidential conversations of his young wife, to be decidedly of opinion that they might esteem, but could never love each other.

In the following spring, I went with them again to Touraine. In this journey, I had the pleasure of seeing M. de Marigny completely reconciled with madame de Séran: except a few moments of sour jealousy at the intimacy of the two ladies, he was rather amiable in their company. With respect to me, he was so pleased to have me as a mediator, that he offered me as a pure gift, for my life, a pretty country house near Ménars. A little grove, a garden, a rivulet of the purest water, a delicious retreat, seated on the banks of the Loire; nothing could be more seducing: but this gift was a chain, and I would wear none.

On my return, I went to Maisons. That was the retreat which had such charms for me; I loved all who dwelt in it, and I flattered myself that I was beloved by them. I could not have been more free or more at my ease in my own house. If my friends wished to see me, they came to Maisons and were welcomed there. The count de Creutz was he who took most pleasure in visiting us, and whose society

we most relished, because, with the rarest qualities of mind, he was simple and good.

Our walk usually extended to a little wood near Alfort, and there we reposed ourselves in its shade. His soul would then expand and unfold itself with me. The sensibility which he delighted to indulge; the pictures that the observation and study of nature had traced in his memory, and of which his imagination was, as it were, a rich and vast gallery; the high conceptions that meditation had inspired in him, and which his mind poured abundantly into mine, whether he spoke of politics or of morality, of men or of things, of sciences or arts, kept me whole hours attentive, and in a kind of enchantment. His country and his king, Sweden and Gustavus, the objects of his idolatry, were the two subjects of which he spoke with most eloquence, and with most rapture. The enthusiasm with which he lavished praises on them would so seize on my mind and my senses, that I would willingly have followed him beyond the Baltic.

Music was one of his most impassioned pleasures, and beneficence was the soul of all his other virtues.

One day he came to conjure me, in the name of our friendship, to extend my hand to a young man, who, he said, was in despair, and on the point of sinking, if I did not save him. "He is a musician," added he, "full of talent, and wants only a pretty comic opera to make his fortune at Paris. He comes from Italy: he has made some essays at Geneva. He arrived with an opera taken from one of your tales (Les Mariages Samnites): it has been heard by the directors of the opera-house, and refused. The unhappy young man is without any resource; I have advanced him a few guineas; I can do no more; and, as a last favour, he has entreated me to recommend him to you."

Before that period, I had done nothing that approached the idea I thought I had conceived of a

French poem, suited to Italian music; I did not even believe that I had the talent for it; but to please the count de Creutz I would have undertaken impossibilities.

I had on my table, at that moment, one of Voltaire's tales (L'Ingénu); I thought it might furnish me with the ground plan of a little comic opera. "I will try," said I to the count de Creutz, "whether I can adapt it to the stage, and draw from it feelings and situations favourable to vocal music. Come again in a week, and bring this young man with you." The half of my poem was written when they arrived. Grétry was transported with joy at it, and went to begin his work while I was completing mine. 'Le Huron' had brilliant success; and Grétry, more modest and more grateful than he has since been, thinking that his reputation was not yet sufficiently established, solicited me not to abandon him. It was then that I composed 'Lucile.'

From the still greater success of this last piece, I perceived that the public were disposed to relish theatrical compositions of a character analogous to that of my 'Tales;' and, with a musician and actors capable of expressing what I conceived, seeing that I could form pictures whose colouring and shades would be faithfully represented, I felt a very lively charm in this species of creation; for I can say that, in restoring the comic opera, I gave it a new character, and created a new species of it. After 'Lucile,' I wrote 'Sylvain;' after 'Sylvain,' 'L'Ami de la Maison,' and 'Zemire and Azor;' and our mutual successes increased with every new exertion. No kind of composition ever afforded me purer enjoyment. My choicest actors, Clairval, Caillot, and madame la Ruette, were the chiefs of their theatre. Madame la Ruette used to invite us to dinner. There I read my poem, and Grétry sang his music. Both being approved in this little council, all was prepared

for the representation of the piece, and after two or three rehearsals it was played.

The sincerity of our actors, with respect to us, was perfect: whether for character or song, they knew exactly what would suit them; and their presentiment of effect was more infallible than our own. For myself, I never hesitated to submit to their opinions; sometimes even they accused me of submitting too readily. For instance, in the interval between 'Lucile' and 'Sylvain,' I had finished a comic opera in three acts taken from my tale of 'Le Connoisseur.' I read it to the little committee. Grétry was charmed with it, madame la Ruette and Clairval applauded; but Caillot was cold and silent. I took him aside. "You are not satisfied," said I; "speak openly: what do you think of the piece you have just heard?"—"I think," said he, "that it is only a diminutive of the 'Métromanie;' that the ridicule of fine affected wit is not poignant enough for a pit like ours, and that your work may possibly be unsuccessful."

Returning to the fire round which the company were sitting, "Madame, and, gentlemen," said I, "we are all fools; Caillot alone is right;" and I threw my manuscript into the fire. They cried out that Caillot had made me act like a very madman. Grétry wept for sorrow, and in going away with me he appeared so disconsolate, that on quitting him I myself was sad.

The eagerness to deliver him from the state in which I had seen him, having prevented sleep, the plan and first scenes of 'Sylvain' were the fruit of my wakefulness. I was writing them in the morning when Grétry entered my room. "I have not closed my eyes all night," said he.—"Nor I neither," answered I. "Sit down and listen to me." I read him my plan, and two scenes. "For effect," added I, "I am sure of my work,

and I'll answer for success." He seized on the two first airs, and went away comforted.

It was thus I employed my leisure; and the produce of a light labour augmented every year my little fortune. But it was not so considerable as to induce madame Gaulard to think it a suitable establishment for her niece; she gave her then another husband, as I have told you; and that society, which I had cultivated with so much care, was soon dissolved. Another incident threw me into their company.

It was natural that the adventure of 'Belisarius' should have cooled in some degree madame Geoffrin's friendship for me; and that, as she was more ostensibly turned to devotion, she should have some repugnance to lodge a censured author in her house. As soon as I could perceive it, I pretended to wish for a more commodious apartment. "I am very sorry," said she, "that I have nothing better to offer you; but I hope that, though you may cease to live in my house, you will not cease to be of the number of my friends, and of the dinners that unite them." After this audience of leave, I hastened to remove; and a lodging that exactly suited me was offered by the countess de Séran, in a hotel which the king had given her. This leads me to resume the thread of her romance.

At her return from Aix-la-Chapelle, the king had received her better than ever, without daring more. At the same time, the mystery of their rendezvous and private meetings had not escaped the vigilant eyes of the court; and the duke de Choiseul, being resolved to remove from the king every woman whose confidence he did not enjoy, had indulged in some light offensive raillery against her. As soon as she was told of it, she determined to awe him to silence. La Borde, the court banker, devoted to the duke de Choiseul, to whom he owed his fortune, was her friend. It was at his house and before him that she had an interview with the minister. "I

have a favour to ask of your grace," said she; "but first I wish to engage you to do me justice. You speak very lightly of me; I know it: you believe that I am one of those women whose ambition is to possess the heart of the king, and to assume over his mind an authority of which you are jealous. I could have revenged myself for the licence you have taken, I prefer undeceiving you. The king expressed his desire to see me; I did not refuse to gratify this desire; we have had private conversations and have kept up a close correspondence. All this you know; but that which you do not know, the letters of the king shall teach you. Read; you will there see an excess of kindness; but as much respect for me as tenderness, and nothing at which I ought to blush. I love the king," added she, "I love him as a father; I would lay down my life for him; but, king as he is, he will never persuade me to deceive him, nor to disgrace myself by granting what my heart cannot and will not give him."

The duke de Choiseul, after having read the letters she had shown him, would have thrown himself at her feet. "Pardon me, madame," said he, "I am to blame, I confess, for having trusted too much to appearances. The king is very right: 'you are only too admirable.' Now, tell me what you require, and what service can be rendered you by a new friend, whom you have just secured for life."

"I am," said she, "on the point of marrying my sister to a worthy officer. Neither my relations nor myself are able to give her a dowry."

"Well, madame," replied he, "the king must provide a dowry for your sister; and I will go and obtain for her, on the royal treasury, an order for eight thousand pounds."—"No, my lord, no: neither my sister nor I will accept money that we have not earned, nor ever shall earn. What we ask for, is a place, which M. de la Barthe has merited by his services; and the only favour that we solicit is, that

he may obtain it in preference to other officers who might have the same pretensions as himself to solicit." This favour was easily granted her. But all that the king could induce her to accept for herself was the present of this little hotel, in which she offered me an apartment.

When I was on the point of fixing myself there, I found myself obliged to prefer another residence: the incident that determined me was this.

My old friend, mademoiselle Clairon, having quitted the theatre and taken a commodious house by the Pont-Royal, wished me to live with her. She knew of the engagement I had formed with madame de Séran; but, as she was acquainted with her kindness and sensibility, she called upon her without my knowledge; and with her theatrical eloquence, she related to her the indignities she had endured from the gentlemen of the king's chamber, and the brutal ingratitude with which the public had paid her services and her talents. In her solitary retreat, her gentlest consolation would have been to have had her old friend with her. She had a convenient apartment to let to me; she was very sure that I should accept it, if I had not engaged to occupy that which the countess had the kindness to offer me. She entreated her to be generous enough to break this engagement herself, and to insist on my lodging at her house. "You, madame," said she, "are surrounded by every species of happiness; and I have none now, but that which I can find in the constant and intimate society of a true friend. For pity's sake, do not deprive me of it!"

Madame de Séran was moved by her solicitation. She suspected me of having given my consent to it; I assured her that I had not. Indeed, the lodging which she had prepared for me, conveniently situated as it was, would have been more agreeable; I should have been more at liberty, and at three steps only from the Academy. This proximity alone would

have been of inestimable value to me in wintry weather, when I should have the bridge to cross if I lodged at mademoiselle Clairon's. I had therefore no difficulty in persuading madame de Séran, that in every respect it was a sacrifice that was required of me. "Well," said she, "you must make this sacrifice: mademoiselle Clairon has claims on you that I have not."

I went then to live in the house of my old friend; and from the first day I perceived, that, with the exception of a little chamber backward, my apartment was wholly improper for a studious man, on account of the intolerable noise of the carriages and carts going over the bridge close to my ear. It is the great thoroughfare for the stone and wood that are brought to Paris. Thus day and night, without intermission, the grinding of the pavement of a steep ascent under the wheels of these carts, and under the feet of the unhappy horses that with difficulty draw them up the ascent, the hoarse cries of the carters, and the piercing cracks of their whips, realised what Virgil says of Tartarus:—

> "Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare
> Verbera: hinc stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ."

But, however afflicting this inconvenience was to me, I took no notice of it to my fair neighbour; and, were it possible to be recompensed by the charms of the most engaging and best chosen society, I was so the whole time that she and I inhabited that house.

She often received visits from the duchess de Villeroy, the daughter of the duke d'Aumont, who, while her father persecuted me, had shown the liveliest regret at seeing him unjust, and herself unable to soften him.

One evening, when she had just quitted my fair neighbour, I was surprised to hear the latter say to me: "Well, Marmontel, you would never tell me who was the author of the parody of 'Cinna:' I

know it at last;" and she named Cury (at that time Cury, his mother and his son were dead). "And who told it you?" I asked with surprise.—"A person who very well knows; the duchess de Villeroy. She has just left me, and you have been the object of her visit. Her father requests to see you."—"Me! her father! the duke d'Aumont!"—"He wishes to consult you on the plays to be represented before the court, on the marriage of the dauphin." "But my father," said she, "would wish that Marmontel should not allude to the past."—"Assuredly," answered I, "Marmontel will not mention it to him: but has your father nothing to say on the regret he must feel at having been so cruelly unjust to him? For I can answer for it, he was most truly so."—"I know it very well," said she, "and my father knows it too. The parody of 'Cinna' was Cury's,—la Ferté has told us so; he had heard the author read it; but, so long as that unhappy man lived, he would not betray him."

I was obliged to acknowledge the truth of what la Ferté had said; and, curious to see what countenance this man, condemned by his own conscience, would assume in my presence, I accepted the interview, and went to his house.

I found him with that same la Ferté, intendant of the *Menus Plaisirs*, examining on a table the plan of a fire-work. As soon as he saw me enter, he dismissed la Ferté; and with a vivacity that disguised his disorder, he conducted me into his chamber. Then with a trembling hand he advances a chair, and with a hasty, officious air invites me to sit down. The duchess de Villeroy had told mademoiselle Clairon that for the fêtes of the court her father was "very much embarrassed." These words recurred to me; and to induce conversation, "Well, my lord duke," said I, "are you so much embarrassed?" At this beginning I saw him turn pale;

but I opportunely added,—" for the plays to be performed before the court;" and he recovered from the painful oppression that my first equivocal words had caused. " Yes," said he, " very much embarrassed; and I should be obliged to you, if you would aid me to conquer this difficulty." He prated a vast deal on the pain and anxiety of such a commission; we looked over the repertories of the theatres; he appeared pleased with my hints, and finished by asking me if, among my manuscripts, I had not some new work of my own. He had heard of 'Zémire and Azor;' he begged me to read it to him; I consented, but to him alone. This was the object of a second tête-à-tête; but, as his erudition extended as far as the Fairy Tales, having recognised in my subject that of Beauty and the Beast, " It is impossible for me," said he, " to give this piece on the marriage of the dauphin: it will be taken for a satire." It was he who had made it, and I kept his satire secret. What is remarkable in our two conversations is, that his vain and feeble mind had not the courage to express any regret for the injustice he had done me, or the most distant desire of seizing some opportunity to repair it.

At that time the prince royal of Sweden made a journey to Paris; he had already expressed a strong attachment for the author of 'Belisarius,' and had been pleased to correspond with me. He requested that he might see me often and in private. I paid my court to him; and, when he learned the death of the king his father, I was the only foreigner he received during the first moments of his grief. I can say that I have seen in him the rare example of a young man wise enough to be sincerely and deeply afflicted at being a king. " What a misfortune," said he, " to find myself, at my age, burthened with a crown, and with an immense duty that I feel myself incapable of fulfilling! I was travelling to acquire the knowledge I wanted, and my travels are suddenly interrupted; I am

obliged to return without having had time to inform my mind, or to see and study mankind; and with them, all intimate intercourse, all faithful and secure correspondence, is henceforth denied me. I must bid an eternal farewell to truth and friendship."—"No, sire," answered I; "truth only flies from kings who reject and will not hear it. You love it, it will follow you; the sensibility of your heart, the frankness of your character, render you worthy of friendship; you will always have friends."—"Men scarcely ever have any; kings never," replied he.—"Here is one," said I, showing him the count de Creutz, who was reading some dispatches in a corner of the room, "who will never prove faithless."—"Yes, he is one," answered he, "and I depend on him; but he will not be with me; my affairs oblige me to leave him here." This little dialogue gives some idea of my conversations with this young prince, with whom I was every day more charmed. After having heard some readings of 'The Incas,' he requested of me, through his minister, a manuscript copy of it; and afterwards, when the work was printed, he permitted me to dedicate it to him.

In that same year, I made a very pleasant visit to Croix Fontaine, but which ended by being a very unfortunate one. A malignant, putrid fever raged all along that side of the Seine. At St Port and Ste Assise many persons had died of it; and at Croix Fontaine a great number of servants were attacked. Those who had not caught it waited on their comrades: mine did not spare himself in the service; and I myself used to go very often and visit the sick,—an act of humanity vainly bestowed. However, I believed myself still in perfect health, when I received a letter from Paris desiring my attendance at the Academy for the reception of the archbishop of Toulouse, an assembly that the king of Sweden was to honour with his presence.

The day after my arrival at Paris, I felt myself as it were exhausted; yet I went to the assembly of the

Academy ; I even read there some detached parts of my work of 'The Incas,' but in a half suffocated voice, without expression and without energy. I had some success ; but my friends perceived with concern that I was very faint and feeble. In the evening the fever seized me. My servant was attacked at the same time, and we were both forty days between life and death. It was the first illness of which Bouvart cured me. He paid me all the attention of a tender friend. And mademoiselle Clairon, during my recovery, gratified me by the most affecting attention : she used to read to me, and the reveries of the Thousand and One Nights were all that my feeble brain could endure.

Shortly afterwards, the Academy lost Duclos; and, on his death, the place of historiographer of France was given me without any solicitation on my part. I must tell you to whom I was indebted for this favour.

While I was living at the house of madame Geoffrin, a man whom I had often met at mademoiselle Clairon's, and whom I esteemed for his loyalty and frankness, Garville, called on me and said : "In the excursions I used to make into Brittany, while the duke d'Aiguillon commanded there, I frequently saw him, and had an opportunity of knowing him. I am informed and convinced that the action which is brought against him is but intrigue and cabal ; but, however good his cause may be, so great is the credit of the states and of the parliament of Brittany, that even at Paris he can find no one to plead for him. The only counsellor who has dared to undertake his defence is a desperate adventurer, a young man whose talent is not formed, but who boldly courts fortune. His name is Linguet. He has written a memorial with which the duke is very much dissatisfied. It is a high-flown declamation, a deformed mass of phrases ridiculously figurative ; it is impossible to publish so unseemly and so absurd a composition. The duke has expressed to me the concern it

gave him. I have advised him to have recourse to some man of letters. "Men of letters," said he, "are all prejudiced against me; they are my enemies." I answered him, that I knew one who was the enemy only of injustice and falsehood, and I named you. He embraced me, saying that I should render him the greatest service if I engaged you to prepare his memorial. I come to beg this favour of you, to conjure you to it in his name."—"Sir," said I to Garville, "my pen will never refuse to plead a good cause. If that of the duke d'Aiguillon be such as you represent it, he may depend on me. Let him confide his papers to me. After having read them, I will tell you more positively whether I can assist him. But tell him that the same zeal, which I shall employ in his defence, would be as willingly exerted to defend the lowest of the people, who should choose, under similar circumstances, to solicit it; and, in discharging this duty, I shall insist on two conditions: one, that the utmost secrecy shall be observed; the other, that it shall never be a question, from him to me, either of thanks or of gratitude: I will not even see him."

Garville faithfully reported to him this answer; and the next day he brought me his memorial with his papers. In these papers I thought I really perceived that the action brought against him, was only a persecution excited by personal animosity. As to the memorial, finding it such as Garville had represented it to be, I moulded it anew. Preserving all that was reasonably good, I introduced into it order and clearness. I removed the rubbish of a style full of incoherent metaphors, and substituted the language of nature. The details being thus corrected, the memorial assumed a more welcome form; for its style, above all, was shocking and ridiculous. At the same time, I added to it something of my own: such as the exordium, in which Linguet had expressed himself with an overweening arrogance; and the con-

clusion, in which he had neglected to collect the forces of his proof and his arguments.

When the duke d'Aiguillon saw my corrections, he he was highly pleased with them. He sent for Linguet:—"I have read your memorial," said he, "and have made some alterations in it, which I wish you to adopt." Linguet read it in its new form; and, boiling with rage, "No, my lord duke," said he; "no, it is not you, it is a man of the profession who has transformed my work. You have done me a mortal injury; you want to dishonour me. But I am no man's scholar; no man has the right to correct me. I sign only my own work, and this work is not mine. Seek some other advocate who will plead your cause; you must no longer reckon on me." And he was going away, the duke d'Aiguillon prevented him. He saw himself at his mercy; for no other counsellor would sign his memorials. He permitted him then to frame this to his will. All the pages that I had written were suppressed. Linguet himself re-wrote the exordium and the conclusion: but he left unimpaired the order which I had introduced into all the rest; he re-established none of the extravagancies of style which I had effaced; and thus in rejecting my labour he profited by it. However, he could not rest till he had discovered the author of the corrections made in his memorial; and from the moment the secret was told him, I know not by whom, he became my most bitter enemy. A periodical paper, which he afterwards published, was swelled with the venom of his rage with which he used to foam at my name.

As for the duke d'Aiguillon, he was perfectly sensible of the improvement I had made in his memorial, in spite of his lawyer; and he pressed Garville to take me to his house, that at least, as he said, he might have the satisfaction of thanking me himself. After having refused his invitations for a long time, I at last yielded, and went once to dine with him.

From that time I had never seen him, when I received from him the following note :—" I have just solicited for you, of the king, sir, the place of historiographer of France, vacant by the death of M. Duclos. His majesty has granted it, and I hasten to announce it to you. Come and thank the king."

This mark of favour, the motive of which was unknown, silenced my enemies at court; and the duke de Duras, who had not the same scruple about 'Beauty and the Beast' that the duke d'Aumont had expressed, requested me, in 1771, to give 'Zémire and Azor' to the theatre at Fontainbleau. It met with the most unbounded success; but it was not without having run the risk of being treated with contempt. 'L'Ami de la Maison,' which was presented the same year at that theatre, was very coldly received. As soon as I felt and understood the cause of it, I applied the remedy, and at Paris it met with as much success as 'Zémire and Azor.' These are mere trifles; but, as they have interested me, they will likewise possess some interest for my children.

When 'Zémire and Azor' was announced at Fontainbleau, the current report was, that I had introduced on the stage the story of 'Beauty and the Beast,' and that the principal character would enter on all fours. I quietly suffered the public to talk. I had written copious instructions for the dresses and decorations: but neither the tailor nor the decorator had given themselves the trouble to read what I had written; and all their preparations were made after the story of 'Beauty and the Beast.' My friends were uneasy concerning the success of my piece; Grétry looked disconsolate; Clairval himself, who had so readily played all my other parts, expressed some repugnance at the idea of playing this. I asked him the reason: "How can you expect," said he, "that I should render interesting a character in which I shall be hideous!"—"Hideous!" answered I: "You will not be at all so. You will be frightful

at first sight; but in your ugliness you will have dignity and even grace."—"Go then," said he, "and look at the beast-like dress they are preparing for me; for I am told it is horrible." The piece was to be played the next day; there was not a moment to lose. I asked to see the dress of Azor. I had great difficulty in obtaining permission from the tailor. He bade me be easy, and rely on him. But I insisted; and the duke de Duras, ordering him to conduct me to the working room had the kindness to accompany me. "Show," said the tailor disdainfully to his workmen, "show the gentlemen the dress of the beast." What did I see? A close dress for the whole body, exactly like the skin of a monkey, with a long bare tail, a bald back, enormous claws to the four paws, two long horns to the cowl, and a mask of disgusting deformity, with boar's teeth! I was thunderstruck, and protested that my piece should not be played in this ridiculous and monstrous disguise. "What could you have wished?" said the tailor, with an impertinent air. "I could have wished," answered I, "that you had read the instructions I wrote: you would have seen that I desired to have the dress of a man, and not of a monkey." —"The dress of a man for a beast?"—"And who has told you that Azor is a beast?"—"The story tells me so?"—"The story is not my work; and my work shall not be represented till all this be changed."—"It is too late now."—"Then I will go and petition the king to consent that this hideous spectacle may not be represented: and I will give my reason." My man then became more tame, and asked me what he should make. "The simplest thing in the world," answered I; "a spotted pantaloon, shoes and gloves of the same, a doliman of purple satin, with black flowing hair, picturesquely scattered, a frightful mask, but not deformed, nor like a snout." There was great difficulty in finding all this, for the store room was empty; but, by dint of obstinacy, I

made myself obeyed; and for the mask, I formed it myself, of pieces cut out of several others, and then joined together.

The next morning I made Clairval try this dress; and, on looking at himself in his glass, he found it noble and imposing.—"Now, my friend," said I, "your success depends upon the manner in which you shall enter on the stage. If you appear confused, timid, embarrassed, we are ruined. But if you present yourself boldly, with assurance, and a firm expressive action, you will command respect; and this danger once past, I will answer for the rest."

I found the decorator guilty of the same negligence with which this impertinent tailor had served me; and the magic picture, the most interesting incident of the piece, must have failed, if I had not done what his awkwardness would have spoiled. With two ells of silver mohair, to imitate a pier looking-glass, and two ells of clear and transparent gauze, I taught him to produce one of the most agreeable of theatrical illusions.

It was thus that, by my assiduity, instead of the disgrace with which I was threatened, I obtained the most brilliant success. Clairval played his part as I desired. The bold and firm step with which he entered produced that impression of astonishment which I expected, and from that instant I was at ease. I was in a corner of the orchestra, and had behind me a row of the court ladies. When Azor, on his knees at the feet of Zémire, sang to her,

> "From the moment we love we are gentle and mild;
> Like you too I tremble, for love is a child:"

I heard these ladies say to each other, "He's now no longer ugly;" and added, the moment afterwards, "He is handsome!"

I ought not to dissemble that the charm of the music contributed marvellously to produce such effects Grétry's was then what it very rarely

has been since; and he was not sufficiently sensible of the care I took to trace him the character, the form, and the design of an agreeable and natural song. In general, the fatuity of musicians is to believe that they owe nothing to their poet; and Grétry, with much talent, had this folly in the highest degree.

As to 'L'Ami de la Maison,' my complaisance for madame la Ruette, my actress, prevented the success which this piece might otherwise have obtained at court. My first wish was to give the part of L'Ami de la Maison to Caillot: I had written it for him; he would have played it admirably. I was sure of it; but he refused it, for a singular reason. "This situation," said he, "too much resembles that in which we sometimes really are; and this character is too much like that which is attributed to us. Were I to play L'Ami de la Maison as you have conceived it, no mother would afterwards suffer me to approach her daughter."—"And Tartuffe," I asked, "would you not play that?"—"Tartuffe," answered he, "does not come so home to us; and no one in society is fearful of our being Tartuffes."

Nothing could conquer his repugnance to a part which, he said, would do him the more injury the better he should play it. At the same time, I had observed that la Ruette was very desirous of having it, and I perceived that his wife thought that, after Caillot, I could but give it to him. Grétry was of the same opinion; I suffered myself to be guided; and I repented of it from the first rehearsal. This part required youth, vivacity, brilliancy of voice, and delicate acting. The good la Ruette, with an oldish face and a trembling, broken voice, was quite out of his walk in this character. He made it sad and pitiful: as he was not at his ease, he did not even play it with his usual simplicity; he spoiled every scene.

On her part, madame la Ruette, who had a little

prudery, persuading herself that the trick and subtlety which I had introduced into the character of Agatha were not suited to so young a woman, had thought it her duty to blunt the point of those playful wiles, and had substituted an air of severity and reserve that deprived the part of all its winning graces.

Thus my whole work was disfigured. Fortunately, la Ruette himself discovered that the part of Cléon did not suit him, either as an actor or a singer: and I found at the same theatre one Julien, less difficult than Caillot, and younger than la Ruette, with a brilliant voice, a lively action, and an animated figure. Grétry and I undertook to teach him his part; and he succeeded in singing and playing it tolerably well.

Madame la Ruette was very little disposed to hear what I had to say to her: however, I just said, "Madame, we shall be cold, if we seek to be too prudent; do me the favour to play the part of Agatha to the life. Her innocence is not that of Agnès, but it is still innocence; and, as she only employs her art and wiles to laugh at the villain who endeavours to seduce her, believe me it will give satisfaction." Her part had the greatest success, and the piece having been ordered again at Versailles (in 1772), appeared so changed that it was scarcely recognised. Yet I had made no alteration in it.

It was not till three years afterwards that I produced 'La Fausse Magie;' and, though its first success was not so brilliant as that of the two others, it has not been less permanent. For more than twenty years it has frequently been revived at the theatre, and the public are not tired of it. However, it is very true that these little pieces have lost some of their lustre and their primeval allurement, in losing the actors for whom I had written them.

That same year (1772) I had at court an appearance of success of another kind, and which affected

me more sensibly; it was the effect that my epistle to the king on the subject of the Hôtel Dieu produced, or appeared to produce. My vanity had no concern in it, but the strong impression I had made, as I was told, was about to change the condition of those poor sufferers whose groans and complaints I had expressed so forcibly that they were heard; and, for the first time in my life, I fancied myself a benefactor of humanity. I gloried in the thought, and would have resigned the last drop of my blood to have really occasioned such a reform; but, alas! that happiness was not mine.

The ode in praise of Voltaire is nearly of the same date. What gave birth to it was this:—the society of mademoiselle Clairon was more than ever numerous and brilliant. The conversation was animated, particularly when poetry was its subject; and the man of letters had opportunities of conversing with men of the world of exquisite taste and highly cultivated minds. It was in one of these conversations that, in speaking of lyric poetry, I said that the ode could not possess in France, that character for truth and dignity which it obtained in Greece, because poets had no longer the same ministry to fulfil; that the bards alone, among the Gauls, had shewn this grand character, because they were, by profession, engaged to celebrate the glory of heroes.

"And in our days," asked they, "what prevents the poet from assuming this ancient character, and consecrating himself to this public ministry?" I answered, "That if there were, as formerly, fêtes, solemnities, where the poet was heard, the pomp of these grand exhibitions would elevate his soul and genius." For an example, I supposed the apotheosis of Voltaire, and on a vast theatre, at the foot of his statue, mademoiselle Clairon reciting verses in praise of that illustrious man: "Can you think," asked I, "that the ode destined for this solemn eulogy would not assume in its spirit, and in the mind of the poet,

a truer and more animated tone, than that which he should coldly compose in his cabinet?" I saw that this idea made its impression, and mademoiselle Clairon above all appeared forcibly struck. Hence I conceived the project of writing, as an essay, that ode which you will find in the collection of my poems.

In reading it, mademoiselle Clairon felt that her talent could supply in it what mine could not effect, and was once more pleased to lend my verses the charm of that illusion which she so well knew how to inspire.

One evening then, when the company were assembled in her drawing-room, and had sent word that they were expecting her, and as we were talking of Voltaire, a curtain suddenly rises; and, by the side of the bust of that great man, mademoiselle Clairon, dressed as a priestess of Apollo, with a crown of laurel in her hand, begins to recite my ode with the air of inspiration, and in the tone of enthusiasm. This little fête had afterwards the merit of giving birth to one more solemn, and at which Voltaire was present.

Shortly afterwards, the count de Valbelle, mademoiselle Clairon's lover, enriched by the death of his elder brother, being gone to enjoy his fortune in the city of Aix, in Provence, and the prince of Anspach having fallen in love with the princess of the stage, she was obliged to take a more ample and more commodious house than that in which we lodged together. It was then that I went to occupy, at the countess de Séran's, the apartment which she had kept for me, and it was there that M. Odde came and passed a year with me.

I could have wished to retire with him to Bort; and for that purpose I had thought of purchasing a little land a short distance from the town, where I should have built myself a cot. Fortunately, this land was valued at so exorbitant a price that I could

not make the purchase, and the project was renounced. I still continued then to indulge in the society of Paris, and particularly in that of the ladies, but resolved to refrain from every connection that might disturb my repose.

I paid my court to the countess de Séran as assiduously as I could do, without being importunate. She had the kindness to express a wish that I would go and pass the spring with her in Normandy, at her little country seat of la Tour, which she was ornamenting. I accompanied her thither. What would I not have quitted for her? All the charm that the friendship of woman and her most intimate converse can have, without love, was offered me with her. Had it been possible to be in love without hope, I certainly should have been so with madame de Séran; but she so distinctly and so ingenuously marked to me the boundary of her sentiments for me, and of those I might indulge for her, that even my wishes never went beyond them.

I was likewise united in pure and simple friendship with women who, on the decline of life, had not ceased to be engaging, and of whom Fontenelle would have said—"You may easily see that love has been there." I had not for them that veneration which is reserved only for virtue; but they inspired me with a sentiment of benevolence that was scarcely less attaching, and which flattered them more. It touched me to see decaying beauty sadden before its mirror, to find its charms had faded. She who, of all my friends, was most afflicted at this irreparable loss, was madame de L. P * * *. She reminded me in her melancholy of these words of a celebrated Grecian beauty, suspending her looking-glass in the temple of her divinity:—

"To Venus this off'ring, for she's ever fair;
It only redoubles my pain:
The face it now shows me augments my despair;
It forgets what I could not retain."

The most feeling, the most delicate, the most affectionate of hearts, was that of madame de L. P * * *. Without pretending to indemnify her for the ravages of time, I sought to console her for them by all the attentions of a rational and tender friend; and, like a docile patient, she accepted all the comforts that my reason offered her. She had even anticipated my counsels in attempting to divert her weariness by cultivating a taste for study, and this taste charmed our leisure. In the early splendour of her beauty, no one suspected with how much nature had endowed her. She was ignorant of it herself. Wholly occupied by her other charms, dreaming only of her pleasures, her voluptuousness and her indolence left, as it were asleep, at the bottom of her heart a crowd of delicate, subtile, and accurate perceptions, which had crept there without her knowledge, and which, in the sad leisure hour she now had left for recalling them, seemed to disclose themselves in abundance, and without exertion. I used to observe them in our conversations awake and expand with infinite grace and ease. Her complaisance induced her to follow me in my studies and labours; she aided me in my researches; but, while her mind was occupied, her heart was vacant: that was her torment. All her sensibility inclined to our mutual friendship; and, confined within the limits of the only sentiments that accorded with her age and mine, it became still more acute. Whether at Paris or in the country, I was as assiduous as possible in my attentions to her. I even very often quitted for her, societies in which my taste would have been more gratified, and I did for friendship what I have very rarely done for love. But no person on earth loved me so tenderly as madame de L. P * * *; and, when I had said to myself, "All the rest of the world are happy though I am absent," I no longer hesitated to abandon all for her. My philosophical and literary societies were the only ones of which

she was not jealous; by every other diversion I afflicted her; and the more gentle, timid, and discreet her reproach, the more nearly did it touch me.

At that time my occupations were divided between history and the Encyclopedia. I made it a point of honour strictly to fulfil my functions of historiographer, by carefully writing some memoirs for future historians. I addressed myself to the most distinguished men of that time, in order to draw from them some information relative to the reign of Louis XV, where I intended to begin; and I was myself astonished at the confidence they showed me. The count de Maillebois gave me all his father's papers and his own. The marquis de Castries gave me free access to his cabinet, which contained the memoirs of marshal de Belleisle; the count de Broglio initiated me in the mysteries of his secret negociations; marshal de Contades traced to me with his own hand the plan of his campaign, and the disaster of Minden. I wanted the confidence of marshal Richelieu; but I, as well as all men of letters in the Academy, was in disgrace with him. Accident made my peace, and this is again one of the events in which opportunity, in order to serve me, has extended her protecting hand.

A fair and intimate friend of marshal Richelieu, being with me on a visit in the country, observed to me, it was very strange that a Richelieu, a man of so much importance, should be exposed to incivilities and affronts at the French Academy. "Indeed, madame," answered I, "nothing is more strange; but who is the cause of it?" She named d'Alembert, who, she said, had taken an aversion to the marshal. I answered, "that the marshal's enemy at the Academy was not d'Alembert, but he who sought to incense him against d'Alembert, and against all men of letters.

"Do you know madame," added I, "who they are that provoke against the Academy the man who

ought to be honoured and beloved there? They are academicians, who themselves enjoy no consideration in it, and who are exasperated against those who do. 'Tis the attorney-general Séguier, the accuser of men of letters to the parliament; 'tis Paulmi, and some other intruders, who, dissatisfied with a corps in which they are misplaced, would wish, with Séguier and our enemy, to raise a formidable party. These are the people who try to alienate from us the mind of the marshal, in order to have him at their head, and injure us by his credit. What glory can he gain by administering to their hatred and petty vanity! You see the benefit he derives from it. He persuades the king to refuse to approve the election of two irreproachable men. The Academy makes a remonstrance, and the king, undeceived, consents that these same men be elected to the two first places that shall become vacant. It was in vain. It was only beating the air. No, madame, the true party for a Richelieu at the Academy, the only one worthy of the marshal, is the party of the men of letters."

She thought I was right; and some days afterwards, the marshal having come to dine at the same house, she was desirous that he should talk with me. I repeated to him nearly the same things, though in gentler terms; and, with respect to d'Alembert, "D'Alembert, marshal," said I, "believes you to be the enemy of men of letters, and the friend of their accuser, Séguier: this is the reason why he does not like you. But d'Alembert is a good man, and the sentiment of hatred has never taken root in his heart. He is wedded to the Academy. Love this, his wife, as dearly as you love the wives of so many others, and come sometimes to see her; he will be flattered by it, and will welcome you, as so many other husbands do."

The marshal was pleased; and when, instead of the abbé Delille and Suard, whom the king had re-

fused, it was necessary to elect two other academicians, I was invited to dine at his house on the day of the election. At this dinner, I found Séguier, Paulmi, and Bissy the bishop of Senlis. Their party was not numerous; and should they have had some clandestine votes, ours was so formed and united as to be sure of victory. I therefore did not appear to think that we were there to talk of academic elections; and, as at a dinner of mirth and pleasure, introducing with the soup the light pleasantry that most diverted the marshal, I led him to converse on ancient gallantry, on the pretty women of his time, and the manners of the regency; from that I adverted to the theatre, and especially to the actresses; so that the dinner passed without a single word having been said about the Academy. It was not till we rose from table, that the bishop of Senlis, taking me aside, asked what choice we were going to make. I answered faithfully, that I believed all the votes were united in favour of Bréquigny and Beauzée. The marshal, who had joined us, requested me to explain the literary merit of these two candidates; and after having heard me,—"As," said he, "they are two worthy men, we must unite to serve them."—"Since that is your intention, marshal," I replied, "will you permit me to go and inform the Academy of this? They are words of peace, that will be heard with pleasure."—"Go," said he, "take one of my carriages that stand in the court; we will soon follow you."

"My dear friend," said I to d'Alembert, "they are coming to join us: the marshal makes you the first advances with a good grace; he must be received in like manner." Indeed he was well received; the election was unanimous; and, from that day till his death, he showed me every kindness. Thus his papers were at my disposal.

I had, at the same time, for the affairs of the regency, the original manuscript of the memoirs

of St Simon, which I had been permitted to take from the office for foreign affairs, and from which I made ample extracts. But these extracts, and the spoils of despatches and memorials which crowded upon me, would soon have been as tedious as fatiguing, if I had not had, at intervals, some literary occupation less laborious and more to my taste. The undertaking of a supplement to the Encyclopedia, in four volumes, folio, offered me this recreation.

You should know, that after the publication of the seventh volume of the Encyclopedia, the continuation having been interrupted by a decree of the parliament, it had only been carried on secretly and between a small number of co-operators, among whom I was not included. A laborious compiler, the chevalier de Jaucour, had undertaken the literary part, and had done it in his way, which was not mine. When, then, by dint of constancy and solicitation, they obtained permission to publish the whole work, and the project of a Supplement had been formed, one of the proprietors, Robinet, called on me, and proposed to me to resume my labour where I had left off. "You only began," said he, "at the third volume, and you closed at the seventh: all the rest is by another hand. *Pendent opera interrupta.* We come to beg you to complete your work."

As I was occupied with history, I answered, "that it was impossible for me to engage in any other work."—"At least," said he, "let us announce in this Supplement that you will contribute a few articles." "I will do it," replied I, "if I have leisure; that is all I can promise." Some time afterwards he returned to the charge, and with him Panckoucke the bookseller. They told me, that in order to regulate the accounts of this undertaking, it was requisite for them to know what recompense each literary man would require for his labour, and that they came to inquire what I demanded for mine. "What can I demand,"

said I, "who promise nothing, who make no positive engagement?"—"You shall do for us what you please," answered Panckoucke; "only promise to give us a few articles, and permit us to insert this promise in our prospectus: we will give you for that one hundred and sixty guineas, and a copy of the Supplement." They were very sure that I should make a point of answering their confidence. I did answer it, and so well, that they afterwards confessed I had exceeded their expectations. But let us resume the thread of the events of my life, that was varied by a thousand accidents.

The death of the king had just produced a considerable change at court, in the ministry, and singularly in the fortune of my friends.

M. Bouret had ruined himself by building and decorating the pavilion of Croix Fontaine, for the king; and the king thought he paid him enough for it by honouring it, once a year, with his presence on one of his hunting parties; an honour which was likewise very expensive to this unfortunate man, who was obliged, on that day, to give the whole hunt a dinner, for which nothing was spared.

I had more than once lamented his profusion; but the most liberal, the most improvident of men, had the fault of never listening to the counsels of his true friends when they touched upon his extravagance. However, he had completely exhausted his credit by building five or six houses in the Champs Elysées, at a great expense, when the king died, without having even thought of saving him from ruin; and this death leaving him overwhelmed with debt, destitute of resource, and without hope, he resolved, I believe, to rid himself of life: he was found dead in his bed. Unfortunately for himself, he was incautious even to infatuation: he was never dishonest.

Madame de Séran was more prudent. Having no longer, at the death of the king, any prospect of favour and protection, either for herself or her

children, she made a more solid use of the only benefit she had accepted; and the new director of the royal buildings, count d'Angiviller, having proposed to purchase her hotel for himself, at a fair price, she consented to it. Thus, in 1776, we were both obliged to remove, three years after she had granted me that welcome hospitality.

The accession of the new king to the crown was followed by his coronation in the cathedral at Rheims.

In my quality of historiographer of France, I was ordered to be present at this august ceremony. I will not here repeat what I have said respecting it in a letter that was printed without my knowledge, and which I have since inserted in the collection of my works. It is a feeble picture of the effect which this grand solemnity produced on fifty thousand spectators who were there assembled. With respect to my own personal feelings, nothing ever affected me more powerfully.

Besides, I had in this journey all the advantages that my place could procure; and I thought I owed them to the honourable manner with which marshal Beauveau, captain of the guards on duty and my brother member at the French Academy, had the kindness to treat me.

Of all the women I have known, whose politeness has most simplicity and charm, is madame de Beauveau. She, as well as her husband, showed a delicate and marked attention, to give the example of respect which they wished other people to pay me, and this example was followed. Feeling intimately the testimonies of their kindness, I have since cultivated it with care. The character of the marshal was not so engaging as that of his wife. Yet that cold dignity, which has been attributed to him as a reproach, never subjected me to the smallest constraint. I was persuaded, that in every other situation, his air, his manners, his tone, would have been the same; and, in adapting myself to what

seemed to me to be his native disposition, I found him civil, kind-hearted, obliging, and without vanity, even eager to serve. As for his wife, now his widow, I do not believe that there is, under heaven, a character more lovely or more accomplished than hers. Indeed she may justly, and without irony, be called the woman who is always right. But the accuracy, the precision, the invariable transparency of her understanding, is accompanied with so much gentleness, simplicity, modesty, and grace, that she makes us love the superiority she exerts over us. She seems to communicate her whole soul to us, associate our ideas with hers, and to make us participate in the advantage she always has of thinking so justly and so well. Her great art, as well as her most continual care, was to honour her husband, to represent him in the fairest colours, to withdraw herself in order to put him in her place, and to yield to him the interest, the consideration, and the respect which she attracted. She would say, that all which was praised in her should be referred to M. de Beauveau. Observe, my dear children, that she lost nothing by this conjugal devotion, that it even honoured her, and that the reflected lustre she lent to the character of her husband did but give to her own more relief and brilliancy. No woman ever felt more forcibly the dignity of her duties as a wife, nor ever fulfilled them with more nobleness.

My letter on the ceremony of the coronation, published and distributed at court by the intendant of Champagne, had there produced the effect of a picture which retraced to the eyes of the king and queen a day of glory and happiness. It was, for me, the dawning of favour. The queen, soon afterwards, showed me some kindness. In her own apartments, on a little stage, she wished to have represented 'Sylvain' and 'L'Ami de la Maison.' This little performance gave great satisfaction; and, passing me, the queen said with the loveliest air, "Mar-

montel, that is charming." But this prospect was soon clouded by the part I took in favour of Italian music.

Under the late king, the Neapolitan ambassador had persuaded the court to procure from Italy a good composer, in order to regenerate the French opera, which had long been on the brink of ruin, and was supported with difficulty at the expense of the public treasury. The new mistress, madame Dubarry, had adopted this idea, and our ambassador at the court of Naples, the baron de Breteuil, had been commissioned to engage Piccini to come and establish himself in France, upon an annual salary of two hundred and fifty pounds, on condition of giving us French operas.

He had scarcely arrived, when my friend the Neapolitan ambassador, the marquis de Caraccioli, came to recommend him to me, and to request I would write for him a tragic opera, such as I had written for Grétry at the comic opera-house.

At that time, the composer Gluck had lately arrived from Germany, as strongly recommended to the young queen, by her brother the emperor Joseph, as if the success of German music had had the importance of business of state. A French opera of 'Iphigénie en Aulide,' had been composed at Vienna, on the plan of a ballet, by Novère. Gluck had written the music for it; and this opera, by which he had made his *début* in France, had met with the greatest success. The young queen had declared in favour of Gluck; and Piccini, who, on his arrival, found him established in the public opinion, in town and at court, not only had no one for him, but at court he had against him the odious title of composer under protection of the late king's mistress; and in town he had for enemies all the French composers, who found it more easy to imitate the German music than the Italian, the style and accent of which they despaired of acquiring.

If I had had a little policy, I should have ranged myself on the favourite side. But the music that was patronised, no more resembled, in its Teutonic forms, that which I had heard of Pergolese, of Leo, of Burancello, &c. than the style of Crébillon resembles that of Racine; and to prefer the Crébillon to the Racine of music would have been an effort of dissimulation that I could not have borne.

Besides, I had conceived a project of introducing Italian music on our two theatres; and you have seen, that in comic operas I had begun with some success. It is not that Grétry's music had all the charm of the best music of the Italians, it was still far from attaining the whole which enchants us in the works of the great composers. But he had an easy melody, simplicity of expression, airs and duetts agreeably arranged; sometimes, even in the orchestra, pleasing accompaniments; with taste too, and understanding enough to supply what he wanted on the side of science and genius; and if his music had not all the witchery and richness of that of Piccini, of Sacchini, of Paesiello, it had its rythm, its accent, its prosody; I had shown then that, at least in comedy, the French language might have a music of the same style as Italian music.

It remained for me to make the same trial in tragedy, and accident now offered me an opportunity of doing so. The problem was more difficult to solve, but for other reasons than those which had been imagined.

Dignified language is less favourable to music, first, because it has no inflections so lively, so accented, so docile to song, as the language of comedy: secondly, because it has less range, less abundance, and less liberty in the choice of expression. But a much greater difficulty to me arose from the idea I had conceived of a lyric poem, and of the theatrical form I had wished to give it. I had made with Grétry the perilous attempt in the opera of 'Céphale

et Procris.' In dividing the action into three pictures —one, voluptuous and brilliant, the palace of Aurora, her waking, her loves, the pleasures of her celestial court; another, dark and fearful, the plot of jealousy, and its poison poured into the heart of Procris; the third, touching, passionate, tragic, the error of Céphale, and the death of his wife, pierced with his darts, and expiring in his arms—I fancied I had realized the idea of an interesting theatrical exhibition: but, not having succeeded in this first trial, and attributing to myself a part of our misfortune, my distrust of my own powers extended even to alarm.

The sentiment of my own weakness, and the good opinion I entertained of the celebrated composer with whom I was honoured, in Piccini, made me conceive the idea of taking the beautiful operas of Quinault, to prune them of their episodes and superfluous details; to reduce them to their real beauties; to add to them airs, duetts, monologues in recitative, chorusses in dialogue and in contrast; to accommodate them thus to Italian music; to form of them a kind of lyric poem more varied, more animated, more simple, less unconnected in its action, and infinitely more rapid than the Italian opera.

Metastasio himself, whom I studied, and whom I admired as a model in the art of designing his verses for song, often appeared to me insupportably tedious, and void of continuity. Those double intrigues, those episodic amours, those detached scenes so multiplied, those airs almost always lost, as has been said, like vignettes at the end of the scenes, all disgusted me. I wanted a full action, rapid and closely connected; in which the situations, linked to each other, were themselves the object and the motive of the air; so that the air should only be the more lively expression of the feelings of the scene, and that the airs, the duetts, the chorusses, should be interwoven with the recitatives. I wanted, besides,

that, in giving itself these advantages, the French opera should preserve its pomp, its prodigies, its solemnities, its illusion, and that, enriched with all the beauties of Italian music, it should still be that spectacle,—

> Where verse, the dance, sweet music's varied tone,
> The art to cheat the eye with colours, the pow'r
> To captivate, seduce, and win the heart,
> Blending a thousand witching charms in one.—VOLTAIRE.

It was in this spirit that the opera of 'Roland' was recomposed. As soon as I had reduced this poem to the state I wished, I felt as delighted as if I had written it myself. I saw the work of Quinault in his plain and simple beauty; I saw the idea which I had conceived of a French lyric poem realised, or on the point of being so, by a skilful composer. This composer did not know a word of French; I undertook to be his master. "When," said he in Italian, "shall we be able to begin this work?"—"To-morrow morning," I replied; and the next day I went to his lodgings.

Figure to yourselves what labour I had in instructing him: verse by verse, almost word by word, it was requisite to explain all to him: and, when he had mastered the sense of a passage, I declaimed it to him, marking very accurately the accent, the prosody, the cadence of the verses, the pauses, the half-pauses, and the articulations of the phrase; he listened to me with eager attention, and I had the pleasure of perceiving that what he had heard was faithfully noted in his memory. The accent and the number of the language struck so correctly on his excellent ear, that in his music, neither the one nor the other ever was or scarcely ever altered. His sensibility in seizing the most delicate inflections of the voice was so acute, that he could express even the finest shades of feeling.

It was to me an inexpressible pleasure to see

exercising under my own eyes an art, or rather a genius, of which till then I had no idea. His harmony was in his head. His orchestra, and all the effects it should produce were present with him. He wrote his song without hesitation, and, when the design of it was traced, he filled all the parts of the instruments or the voice, distributing touches of melody and harmony, as a skilful painter would have distributed colours and shades on his canvass to compose his picture. This labour completed, he opened his harpsichord, which till then had served him for a table; and I heard an air, a duet, a chorus, complete in all its parts, with a truth of expression, an intelligence, a whole, a magic combination, that enchanted the ear and mind.

There it was that I recognised the man I sought, the man who possessed his science, and governed it at his will; and thus the music of 'Roland' was composed, which, in spite of cabal, had the most glorious success.

In the meantime, and in proportion as the work advanced, the zealous amateurs of good music, at the head of whom were the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, rallied round the harpsichord of Piccini, to hear every day some new scene; and every day these entertainments recompensed my trouble. Among these amateurs of music were the two Morellets, my personal friends, and the most active friends Piccini had formed in France. It was by them that, on his arrival, he had been received, welcomed, lodged, and provided with the first necessaries of life. They spared nothing to serve and gratify him; and their house was his.—I loved to think that our being thus associated was an additional motive to the interest they took in him; and between them and myself this object of common affection was a new aliment of friendship.

The abbé Morellet and I had for twenty years frequented the same societies, often opposed in opinion, always agreeing in sentiment and in principles, and

full of esteem for each other. In our most animated disputes, no trait of bitterness or severity ever intruded. Without flattering, we loved each other.

His brother, who had lately arrived from Italy, was quite a new friend; but he had won my heart by his integrity and frankness. They lived together; and their sister, the widow of M. Leyrin de Montigny, was coming from Lyons, with her young daughter, to grace their society.

The abbé, who had informed me of the happiness that awaited them, of being thus united in one family, wrote me, one day, the following note: "My dear friend, tomorrow our ladies arrive; pray come and aid us to welcome them."

My destiny will now assume a new face; and it is from this note that I date the virtuous and unalterable happiness that awaited me in my age, and which I have enjoyed for twenty years.

BOOK X.

So long as heaven had left me, in madame Odde, a sister tenderly dear, and whose love for me was rather filial than fraternal, secure of having in her worthy and virtuous husband a true friend, whose house would be mine, whose children would be mine, I knew where I could pass my age in peace. The esteem and confidence that Odde had acquired, and the excellent reputation he enjoyed in his profession, rendered his advancement facile and secure; and, had he only preserved the employment that he held at Saumur, my little fortune, added to his, would have procured us an honourable sufficiency. Thus, when the world and I should have been weary of each other, my age had a calm and grateful retreat. In

this happy confidence, I glided gently down the stream of life, and without solicitude saw myself on my decline.

But, when I had lost my sister, and her children; when, in his affliction, Odde, abandoning a town where he saw only their tombs, and, resigning his place, had retired to his native province; my prospect of future comfort, till then so serene, suddenly darkened; I saw nothing left but the dangers of marriage, or the solitude of sad celibacy and neglected old age.

In marriage, I dreaded the domestic vexations that it would have been impossible for me to endure and live, and of which I saw a thousand examples. But a misfortune still more dreadful was that of an old man, obliged either to bear the buffets of the world, while he drags out a wearisome and lingering decay, or to remain alone, deserted, at the mercy of his servants, a prey to their rude insolence and servile dominion. In this painful situation I had more than once attempted to find myself a companion, and to adopt a family that should supply the place of that which death had torn from me. But, by a happy fatality, no one of my projects had succeeded, when I saw arrive at Paris the sister and the niece of my friends the two Morellets. It was a gift from heaven.

At the same time, amiable as they both appeared to me, the mother by a character of frankness, cordiality, and kindness, the daughter by an air of candour and modesty, that, united to beauty, added to its lustre, and both by a language in which I easily perceived as much wit as good sense, I did not imagine that I, who was more than fifty, could be a suitable husband for a girl who was scarcely eighteen. Her dazzling qualities, her bloom of youth, her brilliancy of beauty, with charms that nature had yet scarcely disclosed, were what necessarily suppressed my hope, and with hope the desire of possessing her.

In this agreeable adventure, then, I saw nothing for me but a new and charming society.

Whether it be that madame de Montigny was predisposed in my favour, or that my good-nature pleased her at first sight, she assumed the tone of an old friend, whom she had met once more, though I was but the friend of her brothers. We supped together. The joy they all felt at meeting animated the repast. I shared this joy as if I too had been their brother. I was invited to dinner for the next day, and by degrees we contracted the habit of seeing each other every day.

The more I conversed with the mother and listened to the daughter, the more I discovered in both, that engaging natural manner which has always charmed me. But, again, my age and the slenderness of my fortune did not allow me to anticipate any prospect of that happiness for myself, which I foretold for the husband of mademoiselle de Montigny; and more than two months had elapsed before the idea occurred to me of aspiring to that happiness.

One morning, a friend of mine, who was also one of the friends of the Morellets, the abbé Maury, called on me, and said, "Shall I tell you a piece of news? Mademoiselle de Montigny is going to be married."—"Married! to whom?"—"To you."—"To me!—"Yes, to you yourself."—"You are mad, or you are dreaming."—"I do not dream, and it is no madness; it is a very sensible thing, and none of your friends doubt it."—"Hear me," said I, "and believe me; for I am serious. Mademoiselle de Montigny is a charming girl; I think her accomplished; and for this reason I never entertained the extravagant idea of pretending to be her husband."—"Well, you will be so, without having pretended."—"At my age!"—"Aye, at your age. You are still young, and in full health." And there he was, displaying all his eloquence to prove to me that nothing was more suitable; that I should be loved; that we should

make a happy couple; and, in a prophetic tone, he predicted that we should have charming children.

After this sally, he left me to indulge my reflections; and, while I pronounced him to be mad, I began to be scarcely more sane myself. To be fifty-four no longer appeared to me so dreadful an obstacle; health, at that age, might supply the place of youth. I began to think that I might inspire, not love, but a kind and tender friendship; and I recollected what sages had said, that friendship makes more happy couples than love.

I thought I had remarked in this young and beautiful girl some pleasure in seeing me, and some in hearing me; her fine eyes, when fixed on me, had a character of interest and benevolence. I even went so far as to fancy, that, in the attentions with which her mother honoured me, in the pleasure that her her uncle showed at the frequency of my visits, there was, perhaps, some disposition favourable to the wish I dared not entertain. I was not rich; but five thousand guineas, securely invested, were the fruit of my savings. In fine, since a sincere friend, the abbé Maury, thought this union not only rational but desirable on both sides, why should I myself think it so injudicious a match?

I was engaged that day to dine at Morellet's. I went there with an emotion that was new to me. I think too I recollect having dressed myself rather more smartly than usual; and from that instant my attention was seriously fixed on what began to interest me very powerfully. Not a word was neglected, not a look escaped me: I delicately made imperceptible advances, and slight attempts on their minds and hearts. The abbé seemed to pay no attention to them; but his sister, his brother, and his niece, appeared to me very sensible to all that came from me.

About this time, the abbé made a journey to Brienne, in Champagne, to see the unfortunate Loménic, with whom he had been intimate from his

youth; and, in his absence, the party became more familiar, and more closely united.

I well knew that flattering appearances might render the attraction of a first union deceitful; I knew what illusion grace, joined with beauty, could create: two or three months of acquaintance and social intimacy could scarcely suffice to assure myself of the disposition of a young girl. I had seen more than one in the world who had been taught only to feign and dissemble; but I had heard so much in praise of the simplicity of mademoiselle de Montigny, and this simplicity appeared to me so unaffected, so pure, and so true, so far removed from every species of dissimulation, of feint, and of artifice, while kindness of heart, innocence, and tender modesty were so visibly expressed in her air and language, that I felt myself irresistibly inclined to believe all I was told of her; and, if I did not give credit to so much semblance of truth, I must renounce all confidence, and believe nothing.

A walk in the gardens at Sceaux ripened my decision. Never did this place appear to me so beautiful; never had I breathed the air of the country with so much delight; the presence of mademoiselle de Montigny had embellished all: her looks diffused an enchantment around her. What I felt was not that delirium of the senses which is called love; it was a calm enjoyment, such as that of pure spirits is described. Shall I confess it? it seemed to me then, that, for the first time, I recognised the true sentiment of love.

Till then, sensual pleasure had been the only charm that had guided me. Here I found myself enchanted by more invincible spells; they were candour, innocence, sweet sensibility, chaste and timid bashfulness, a modesty whose veil adorned grace and beauty; it was virtue crowned with the flowers of youth that ravished my soul still more than my eyes; a kind of sorcery infinitely superior to those of the

Armidas that I once thought I saw in the gay world.

My emotion was the more lively because it was suppressed I longed to make an avowal of it; but to whom? and how would it be received? The good mother gave me an opportunity. In the alley where we were walking, she was at three steps from us with her brother. "What confidence," said she, smiling, "must I have in you, to suffer you to talk thus with my daughter, tête-à-tête!"—"Madame," answered I, "it is right that I should return that confidence, by telling you what was the subject of our conversation. Mademoiselle was picturing to me the happiness you enjoy, by being all four united in one family; and I, who felt envious of this happiness, was going to ask you if a fifth, one like myself, for example, would spoil the society."—"I should think not," she replied; "but ask my brother."—"I," said the brother frankly, "should be highly pleased with it."—"And you, mademoiselle?" "I," said she, "I hope that my uncle the abbé will think as my mother does; but, till his return, permit me to be silent."

As we all concluded that his sentiments would coincide with our own, as my intention was now declared, and the mother, the daughter, and the uncle, had consented, I no longer dissembled. I even thought I perceived that a sentiment, which occupied *my* mind incessantly, found some access to her heart who was its object.

The abbé made us wait for him; at last he arrived: and, though all had been settled without his consent, he gave it. The next day the contract was signed. He made his niece his heiress after his death and that of his sister; and I, in this deed, drawn up and written by their attorney, was only anxious to render, at my decease, my wife happy, and independent of her children.

Never was a marriage celebrated under happier auspices. As the confidence between mademoiselle

de Montigny and myself was mutual and perfect, and as we had well persuaded each other that our feelings agreed intimately with the vow which we were about to make at the altar, we pronounced it without agitation or inquietude.

On our return from the church, where Chastellux and Thomas had held over us the nuptial veil, our friends were pleased to leave us for some moments alone; and these moments were employed in expressing mutually our earnest desire to render each other happy. This first effusion of two hearts, that sincerity on one side and innocence on the other, and the tenderest friendship on both, unites for ever, is perhaps the most delicious moment in life.

The dinner, after the toilet, was animated by the gaiety of good old times. The guests were d'Alembert, Chastellux, Thomas, Saint Lambert, a cousin of the Morellets, and some other common friends. All were occupied with the bride; and, like me, all were so charmed with her, and so jovial that to see them you would have said that each was her bridegroom.

When we rose from table, we passed into a saloon, which was decorated by the rich library of the abbé Morellet. A harpsichord, and little desks, announced music; but what new and bewitching music were we to hear! The opera of 'Roland;' the first French opera that had ever been set to Italian music; and to execute it, the finest voices and the most distinguished musicians of the opera-house!

The emotion that this novelty excited had all the charm of surprise. Piccini was at the harpsichord; he animated the orchestra and the singers with the fire of his genius. The Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors were present at this concert, and were delighted with it. Marshal Beauveau was likewise at the fête. This species of enchantment lasted till supper, to which the singers and instrumental performers were invited.

Thus passed this joyous day, the epoch and the presage of that happiness which has diffused itself over the remainder of my life, through the adversities that have often disturbed, but have never impaired it.

It was agreed that we should live together, the two uncles, the mother, and ourselves, each paying a fifth part of the expenses of the house; and this plan suited me in every respect. It united the advantage of domestic fellowship to that of a society of friends, which we had only to enjoy.

I have made you acquainted with some of those whom we could call our friends; but there are others, of whom I have much to speak, though cursorily, and on whom my memory delights to dwell.

You have a thousand times, my dear children, heard your mother say what pleasure we derived from the company of M. de Saint Lambert and the countess d'Houdetot, his friend; and what was the charm of a society where wit, taste, the love of letters, all the most essential and most desirable qualities of the heart, attracted and attached us, now to the sage d'Eaubonne's, and now to the sweet retreat of la Sevigné de Sanois. Never did two minds form a more perfect concord of sentiments and ideas. But they particularly resembled each other in an inviting eagerness to give a hearty welcome to their friends. It was a politeness at once free, easy, and attentive; the politeness of an exquisite taste, which comes from the heart, which goes to the heart, and which only sensitive minds can know.

Saint Lambert and I had been at the parties of baron d'Holbach, of Helvétius, and of madame Geoffrin; we were as constantly at those of madame Necker; but in this I was his senior; I was nearly its oldest member.

It was at a citizen's ball, a singular circumstance, that I became acquainted with madame Necker; then

young, with some beauty, and a brilliant freshness, dancing ill, but with her whole soul.

She had scarcely heard my name, when she came to me, with the genuine air of joy:—"On arriving at Paris," said she, "one of my desires has been to know the author of the 'Moral Tales.' I did not expect so fortunate a meeting at this ball. I hope that it will not be a transient adventure. Necker," said she to her husband, calling him, "come and second me in engaging M. Marmontel, the author of the 'Moral Tales,' to do us the honour of visiting us." M. Necker was very civil in his invitation, which I accepted. Thomas was the only literary man whom they had known before me. But shortly, in the beautiful hotel which they had taken, madame Necker selected and composed her society, on the model of that of madame Geoffrin.

A stranger to the manners of Paris, madame Necker had none of the allurements of a young French woman. In her manners and language she had neither the air nor the tone of a woman educated in the school of art, and formed in the school of the world. Without taste in her dress, without ease in her carriage, without attraction in her politeness; her understanding, like her countenance, was too formal to possess grace.

But a charm more worthy of her was decorum, candour, and kindness. A virtuous education, and solitary studies, had given her all that cultivation can add to an excellent disposition. Her sensibility was perfect; but her thoughts were often confused and vague. Meditation, instead of clearing her ideas, troubled them; by exaggerating, she thought she enlarged them; to extend them, she bewildered herself in abstractions, or in hyperboles. She seemed to see certain objects only through a mist that magnified them to her eyes; and then her expressions were so inflated, that their energy

would have been ludicrous had you not known that she was sincere.

In her, taste was less a result of feeling, than of opinions, collected and transcribed into her pocket-book. Had she never quoted her authorities, it would have been easy to say on what, and after whom, her judgment had formed itself. In the art of writing, she esteemed only elevation, majesty, and pomp. Gradations, shades, the varieties of colouring and tone, touched her feebly. She had heard much in praise of the genuine simplicity of Lafontaine, and of the natural ease of Sevigné; she would talk of them from hear-say, while she felt them but little. The graces of negligence, ease, and the flow of soul, were unknown to her. Even in conversation, familiarity displeased her. I often amused myself with seeing how far she carried this delicacy. One day, I quoted to her some familiar expressions, which, I said, I thought might be received into the loftiest style:—as *faire l'amour; aller voir ses amours; commencer à voir clair; prenez votre parti; pour bien faire, il faudroit; non, vois-tu; faisons mieux*, &c. She rejected them as unworthy a dignified style. "Racine," said I, "was less difficult than you are. He has made use of them all;" and I showed her the examples. But her opinion, once established, was unalterable; and the authority of Thomas, or that of Buffon, was for her an article of faith.

You would have said that she reserved rectitude and accuracy for the rule of her duties. There, all was precise and severely measured; even the amusements in which she seemed desirous of indulging had their reason, their method.

You would see her wholly occupied with making herself agreeable to her society, eager to welcome those she had admitted to it, attentive to say to each what could most please him: but all this was premeditated; nothing flowed naturally, nothing created illusion.

It was not for us, it was not for herself, that she exerted all her cares; it was for her husband. To make him acquainted with us, to win our favour for him, to have him spoken of with eulogy in the world, and to begin his renown, was the principal object of the foundation of her literary society. But it was requisite too that her drawing-room, and that her dinner, should be a recreation, a spectacle for her husband; for indeed he was there only a cold and silent spectator. Except a few smart words that he introduced here and there, he sat mute and inanimate, leaving to his wife the care of supporting the conversation. She did all she could; but her mind had none of those pretty graces that are the soul of the familiar dialogue of the table. Not a single sally, not one vivid touch, not one flash of gaiety, that could awaken wit. Restless, troubled, as soon as she found the scene and the dialogue languish, she sought the cause of it in our eyes. Sometimes, even, she had the sincerity to complain of it to me. "How can it be otherwise, madame?" used I to say to her: "wit is not always at our command, nor are we always in a humour to be engaging. M. Necker himself is perhaps not every day amusing."

The attentions of madame Necker, and all her desire to please us, could not have conquered the disgust of being at her dinners for the sole purpose of entertaining her husband. But it was with these dinners as with many others, where the guests enjoying themselves, dispense with wit and gaiety in their host, provided he dispense with their attentions.

While Necker was minister, those who had known him in his private life have attributed his silence, his gravity, and his reserve, to the arrogance of his new situation. But I can attest, that even before fortune had thus elevated him, while he was the simple partner of Thelluson the banker, he had the same air, and the same grave and silent character, and that he was neither more friendly nor more familiar. He received

his company politely; but he manifested none of that cordiality which, and which alone, gives to politeness the semblance of friendship.

His daughter has said of him, "that he had the art of keeping all men at a distance." If that were her father's motive of action, in disclosing it she betrayed, very inconsiderately, the secret of a ridiculous pride. But the simple truth was, that a man accustomed from his youth to the close, mysterious transactions of a bank, and buried in the calculations of commercial speculation, knowing nothing of the world, little conversant with men, and still less so with books, superficially and vaguely informed on all that did not concern his profession,—such a man was obliged, from discretion, prudence, and self-love, to keep himself reserved, in order that he might not discover his poverty: thus he would speak freely and fluently on every subject with which he was acquainted, but cautiously on every other. He was therefore adroit and prudent, not arrogant. His daughter is sometimes rash, though she is always charming.

With respect to madame Necker, she had among us some friends whom she distinguished; and I was always of this number. It was not that our opinions and tastes harmonised; I even affected to oppose my simple and vulgar ideas to her high conceptions; and it was requisite for her to descend from those inaccessible heights in order to communicate with me. But, though unapt to follow her in the region of her thoughts, and more a slave to my senses than she would have wished, I was not the less one of her favourites.

Her society had one very great attraction, for me, that of meeting there the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, two men whose absence and whose loss I have much regretted. The one by his sincerity and cordiality, as much as by his taste and talents, rendered his converse every day more desirable to me. The other by his warm friendship, his

mild philosophy, and by an, as it were, grateful odour of ingenuous and modest virtue, by a melancholy and affecting tone of language and character, attached me yet more intimately. I used to see them at my own house, at theirs, and at our friends, as often as possible, and never so often as I wished.

Happy in my social circles, still happier in my domestic enjoyments, I was expecting, eighteen months after my marriage, the birth of my first child, as an event that should crown all my wishes. Alas! how cruelly were my hopes deceived! this child, so ardently desired, died ere it saw the light. Its mother, astonished and frightened at not hearing its cries, asked to see it; and I, motionless and trembling, was still in the adjoining drawing-room, waiting her delivery, when my mother-in-law came and said to me, "Come and embrace your dear wife, and save her from despair; your child has died in its birth." I felt my heart pierced at these disastrous words. Pale and petrified, supporting myself with difficulty, I crept to the bed of my wife, and there, making an effort over myself, "My dear wife," said I, "this is the moment to prove that you really live for me: our child is no more, he died while you were suffering." The wretched mother uttered a cry that pierced my heart, and fell lifeless into my arms. As she will read these memoirs, let us pass over those cruel moments, that I may not again open a wound that bled too long.

At the birth of her second child, she resolved to suckle it. I opposed this resolution: I thought her still too feeble. The nurse that we had chosen was, apparently, the best possible; with an appearance of health and freshness, a good complexion, rosy lips, beautiful teeth, and a fine breast, she had everything but milk. That breast was marble; the child wasted: it was at St Cloud; and, till its mother should be able to go and see it, the rector of the village had promised us to watch its progress: he

indeed sent us news of it; but he had the cruelty to mislead us.

On arriving at the nurse's, we were painfully undeceived. "My dear little boy is ill," said his mother to me; "see how his hands are withered! He looks at me with eyes that implore my pity. This woman must bring him to Paris, that my surgeon may see him." She came; the surgeon was called in, he examined her breast, and he found that she had no milk. He went instantly in search of another nurse; and as soon as the child had taken this new breast, where he drew from a copious stream, he found its milk so good that he could not satisfy himself.

What was our joy to see him visibly recover, and gain new life, like a dried and dying plant that is watered! This dear child was Albert; and we seemed to have a sweet presentiment of the consolations he now affords.

My wife, in order to keep the nurse with her, and give a pure air to the child, was desirous of having a house in the country, and a friend of her brother's lent us his at St Brice.

In this village were two estimable men, intimately acquainted, and whose friendship I soon enjoyed. One was the rector, the abbé Maury's eldest brother, a man of a sound mind and excellent character; the other was an old bookseller, Latour; a mild, peaceful, modest man, of strict integrity, and as obliging to me as he was charitable to the poor of the village. His library was my own.

I was then writing for the Encyclopedia. I rose with the sun; and after having employed eight or ten hours of the morning in committing to paper a multitude of observations, that I had made in my studies, I gave the rest of the day to my wife and child. He already formed our delight.

In proportion as the good milk of our young Burgundian made health flow in his veins, we saw the

flesh become round and firm on his little body, and on all his delicate limbs; we saw his face assume a rosy colour and finer form. We thought too that we saw his little mind unfold, and gradually come into bloom. Already he seemed to understand us, and began to know us: his smile and voice replied to the smile, to the voice of his mother; I saw him pleased too with my caresses. His tongue soon essayed those first words of nature, those names so sweet, that from the lips of the child go straight to the heart of the father and mother.

I never shall forget the moment when, in our garden of St Brice, my child, who had not yet dared to walk without his leading-strings, seeing me at three steps from him on my knees, holding out my hands to him, disengaged himself from the nurse's arms, and with unsteady feet, but resolute, came to throw himself into mine. I know very well that the emotion I felt at that instant is a pleasure that kind nature has rendered common. But alas for those corrupt hearts that need rare and artificial impressions in order to be moved! A lady of our acquaintance said jokingly of me, "He fancies there is no father in the world but himself." No; I do not pretend that paternal love has delights for me that others may not share; but, were this common happiness granted only to me, I could not be more alive to it. My wife was not less so to the first pleasures of maternal love; and you may conceive that, with our child in our arms, we neither of us wished for any other amusement, or any other society.

At the same time, our family and some of our friends used to come and see us on holidays. The abbé Maury was of the number, and you should have heard how he gloried in having foretold our happiness! We sometimes too saw our neighbours, the rector of St Brice, the good Latour, and his worthy wife, who loved mine.

We often took solitary walks; and the end of these walks was usually that chesnut wood at Montmorency, which Rousseau has rendered so famous.

"It is here," I used to say to my wife, "that he imagined that romance of Héloise, in which he has employed so much art and eloquence to give to vice the hue of honesty and the tint of virtue."

My wife was partial to Rousseau; she felt infinitely grateful to him for having persuaded women to suckle their children, and for having used his efforts to render this first stage of life gentle and happy. "We may pardon him something," she used to say, "who has taught us to be mothers."

But I, who had only seen in the conduct and writings of Rousseau a perpetual contrast of beautiful language and vile morality; I, who had seen him announce himself the apostle and the martyr of truth, and abuse it incessantly with adroit sophisms; deliver himself by calumny from the gratitude that oppressed him; choose in his savage spleen and distorted vision the falsest colours to blacken his friends; defame those men of letters whom he had most reason to praise, in order to signalize himself singly, and eclipse them all; I made my wife feel, by the good itself that Rousseau had done, all the evil that he might have abstained from doing, if, instead of employing his art to serve his passions, and to colour his hatred, revenge, and cruel ingratitude, to give specious appearances to his calumnies, he had worked on himself to subjugate his pride and irascible temper, his dark distrust, his sad animosities, and to become again, what nature had made him, innocently feeling, equitable, sincere and good.

My wife listened to me sorrowfully. One day, she said; "My love, I am sorry to hear you often speak ill of Rousseau. You will be accused of being excited against him by some personal enmity, and perhaps by a little envy,"

"As to personality in my aversion," I replied,

"that would be very unjust; for he has never offended me, nor has he done me any injury. It would be more possible that there should be envy in it, for I admire him enough in his writings to be envious of him; and I should accuse myself of being so, if I ever detected myself in defaming him. But I experience, on the contrary, in speaking to you of his diseased mind, that bitter sorrow which you feel in hearing me."—"Why then," replied she, "in your writings and conversations, treat him with such severity? Why dwell on his vices? Is there no impiety in disturbing the ashes of the dead?"

"Yes, the ashes of the dead," said I, "who have left no dangerous example, whose memory is not pernicious to the living. But should sweetened poisons in the writings of an eloquent sophist, and of a seducing corrupter; should the fatal impressions he has made by specious calumnies; should all the contagion that a celebrated talent has left; be suffered to pass current under favour of the respect which we owe to the dead, and perpetuate themselves from age to age? Most certainly I will oppose, either as preservatives or counter-poisons, all the means in my power; and, were it only to clear the memory of my friends from the spots with which he has sullied it, I will leave, if I can, to the proselytes and enthusiasts that are still left him, the choice of thinking that Rousseau was either mad or malicious. They will accuse me of being envious. But a crowd of illustrious men, to whom I have rendered the justest and purest homage, will attest that in my writings envy has never obscured justice and truth. Whilst Rousseau was living, I spared him, because he needed the assistance of men, and I would not injure him. He is now no more; and I owe no indulgence to the reputation of a man who has indulged no one, and who in his memoirs has defamed the men who most loved him."

With respect to Héloise, my wife was sensible of the danger of its morality; and what I have said of it

in my 'Essai sur les Romains' needed no apology. But did I always so severely condemn the art which Rousseau had employed to render interesting the crime of St Preux, and that of Julie; the one seducing his pupil, the other abusing the good faith and probity of Wolmar? No, I confess it; and my morality, in my new position, savoured of the influence that our personal interests have on our opinions and feelings.

In living in a world where public morals are corrupted, it is difficult not to contract at least some indulgence for certain fashionable vices. Opinion, example, the seductions of vanity, and above all the allurements of pleasure, impair, in young hearts, the rectitude of genuine feeling: the light air and tone with which old libertines have the art of turning into jest the scruples of virtue, and of converting into ridicule the rules of delicate integrity, imperceptibly destroy the serious importance that the young mind was wont to attach to them. Marriage, above all, has cured me of this tenderness of conscience.

Shall I say it? None but a husband, a father, can judge rationally of those contagious vices that attack morals in their source; of those insinuating and perfidious vices that bring trouble, shame, hatred, desolation, and despair, into the bosom of families.

A bachelor, insensible to those afflictions that are foreign to him, neither thinks of the tears he will cause, nor of the fury and revenge he will excite in a wounded heart. Wholly occupied, like the spider, in spreading his nets, and watching the instant for entangling his prey, he either effaces from his moral code respect for the most holy rights, or if they ever recur to his memory, he considers them as laws that are fallen into disuse. What so many others permit themselves to do, or applaud themselves for having done, appears to him, if not lawful, at least excusable. He thinks he may enjoy the licence of the morals of the times.

But, when he has put himself in the number of those whom the seductions of an adroit corrupter may render wretched for life; when he sees that the artifices, the flattering and enticing language of a young fop have only to surprise the innocence of a daughter or the weakness of a wife to ruin the peace of the most virtuous man, and one day perhaps his own; warned by his personal interest, he feels how essentially the honour, the faith, the sanctity of conjugal and domestic morals are to a husband and a father inviolable properties; and then he sees, with a severe eye, all that is criminal and dishonourable in profligate manners, with whatever decoration eloquence may clothe it, and under whatever exterior of virtue and decorum an industrious writer may disguise it.

I therefore blamed Rousseau; but in blaming him I grieved that splenetic passions, a sombre pride, and a vain glory, should have spoiled the ground-work of so fine a spirit.

If I had had a passion for celebrity, two great examples would have cured me of it; that of Voltaire, and that of Rousseau; examples very different, quite opposite in many respects, but agreeing in this point, that the same thirst for praise and renown was the torment of their lives.

Voltaire, whom I had just seen expire, had sought glory by all the roads that are open to genius, which he had deserved by his immense exertions and brilliant results. But, on every road to fame, he had encountered envy, and all the furies by whom she is escorted. Never did any man of letters bear so much outrage, without any other crime than that of possessing great talents, and the ardour of signalizing them. Those who envied him fancied they could be his rivals by showing themselves his enemies; those whom as he passed he trod under foot, insulted him as they crawled. His whole life was a contest, which he unweariedly maintained.

The combat was not always worthy of him; and he had more insects to crush than serpents to strangle. But, though he would not provoke, neither would he overlook offence: the vilest of his assailants have been branded by his hand: the shaft of ridicule was the instrument of his vengeance, and he wielded it most fearfully and cruelly. But to him, the greatest of blessings, repose, was unknown. It is true that envy at last appeared tired of the pursuit, and began to spare him on the brink of the grave. On his return to Paris, after a long exile, he enjoyed his renown, and felt the enthusiasm of a whole people grateful for the pleasures that he had afforded them. The weak and last effort that he made to amuse them, 'Irène,' was applauded as 'Zaïre' had been; and this representation, at which he was crowned, was to him the most delightful triumph. But at what a moment did this tardy consolation reach him, the recompense of so much anxiety! The next day I saw him in bed. "Well," said I, "are you at last satiated with glory?"—"Ah! my good friend," he replied; "you talk to me of glory, and I am dying in frightful torture!"

Such was the end of one of the most illustrious of all literary men, and one of the most engaging of all social companions. He was alive to injury, but so he was to friendship. That with which he honoured my youth was unvaried till his death, and a last proof that he showed me of it was the reception, full of grace and kindness, which he gave my wife, when I presented her to him. His house was perpetually filled with the crowd that pressed to see him, and we were witnesses of the fatigue he underwent to reply suitably to each. That continual attention exhausted his strength; and for his true friends it was a painful spectacle. But we were admitted to his supper parties, and there we enjoyed the last glimmerings of that brilliant intellect which was soon to be wholly extinguished.

Like him Rousseau was wretched, and through the same passion. But the ambition of Voltaire was imbued with modesty, as may be seen in his letters; whereas that of Rousseau was coupled with vanity; the proof of it is in his writings.

I had seen him, in the society of the most estimable men of letters, welcomed and esteemed: that was not enough for him; their celebrity shaded his, and he thought them jealous. To him their kindness was suspicious. He began by distrusting, and ended by aspersing them. He had friends in spite of himself; their benevolence was importunate to him. He received their favours; but he accused them of wishing to humble, to dishonour, to defame him; and he returned their beneficence with the most odious defamation.

He was never spoken of in society but with extreme interest. Even criticism itself as regarded him was full of respect, and tempered with eulogies. He would say, it was only the more artful and perfidious. In the most calm retreat, he always chose to fancy or affirm that he was persecuted. His disease was that of imagining in the most fortuitous events, in the most common occurrences, some intention of injuring him, as if in the world all the eyes of envy had been fixed on him alone. If the duke de Choiseul had conceived the conquest of Corsica, it was in order to take from him the glory of being its legislator. If the same duke went to sup at Montmorency with the duchess of Luxembourg, it was to usurp the place that he was wont to occupy near her at table. Hume, he would say, was envious of the reception which the prince de Conty had given him. He never pardoned Grimm for having had some preference over him at madame d'Epinay's; and you may see in his 'Memoirs' how his cruel vanity revenged this offence.

Thus were the lives of Voltaire and Rousseau perpetually, though differently, agitated. For the one had often been reserved the sharpest pains, yet not

without some intense enjoyments; for the other, one continued flood of bitterness, without any mixture of joy or sweetness. Most certainly at no price would I have wished for the condition of Rousseau; he could not endure it himself; and, after having poisoned his days, I am not at all surprised that he voluntarily abridged their duration.

As for Voltaire, I confess that I likewise thought his glory too dearly purchased by the afflictions to which it had exposed him; and I used to repeat again and again—Less lustre and more quiet.

Limited in my ambition, first by the necessity of adapting my flight to the feebleness of my wings, and then again by the love of that tranquillity of mind which accompanies peaceful employment, and which I believed to be the lot of humble mediocrity, I should have been contented in that happy state. Thus, early renouncing all presumptuous attempts, I had as it were capitulated with envy, and reduced myself to that kind of writing in which, with her, success is pardoned without difficulty. I was not the more spared for it; and I found that little things still inspire, in little souls, an envious malignity.

But I had established for myself two principles: one, never in my writings to provoke offence by offence; the other, to despise attack and never to reply. I was misunderstood for thirty years in my resolution; yet all the rage of the Frérons, the Pallisots, the Linguets, the Auberts, and their associates, never irritated me against them. Why then was I less passive at the moment of the dispute on music? Because I was not the only one insulted by my adversaries, and that I had to revenge an artist inhumanly attacked in his dearest interests.

Piccini had a wife and numerous family, who subsisted on the fruit of his labour: his peaceful and gentle character rendered him still more interesting. I saw him alone, without intrigue, exerting every

effort to please a public new to him; and I saw at the same time a pitiless cabal assailing him with fury, like a swarm of wasps. I expressed my indignation at it; the cabal became irritated, and the wasps turned all their stings against me.

The chiefs of the cabal had a press at their command to print their squibs, and a newspaper to spread them abroad. In this I wasevery day insulted. I had not the same convenience for defending myself; and, had I had it, this sorry warfare would not have accorded with my taste. However, I determined to amuse myself in turn; for to have been angry at this raillery would have displayed a pitiful character.

I conceived a plan for putting their intrigue in action, and for painting them to the life, having only to put their own language into rhyme, in order to render them ridiculous. They printed their prose, I recited my verses; and every day, it was who should make the circle of his friends laugh most?

It is thus that my poem on music was composed for the defence of Piccini: perhaps I should have done better to have confided the cause to 'Roland,' 'Atys,' 'Didon,' &c.; but I have not always done what prudence would have dictated, and I confess that on this occasion I did not think his unjust treatment and my own sufficiently revenged by the silence of contempt. And if, out of a dispute as frivolous as it was ephemeral, I made a poem in twelve cantos, my excuse must be, that circumstances led to it by insensible gradations. I might, I confess, have employed my time better; but the monotony of my labours required some relief, and my moments of amusement and recreation were all that I gave to 'Polyhymnia.'

During my residence at St Brice, an event of a more serious interest occurred. It was the retreat of M. Necker from the ministry. I have already said that his character was by no means attractive. He had never given me reason to think him my friend. I was not his. But as he showed me as much esteem

and kindness as I could expect from a man so coldly polite, and as on my part I had a high opinion of his talents, knowledge, and the ambition he had shown to signalize himself by benefiting the state, I was grieved at his retreat.

I felt besides for madame Necker the sincerest veneration; for in her I had witnessed nothing but kindness, prudence, and virtue; and the particular affection with which she honoured me, well deserved that I should take some interest in an event which I felt sure had deeply affected her.

When I heard of it at St Brice, imagining they had already retired to their country house at St Ouën, I instantly went thither. They had not yet arrived; and, pursuing my road, I was going to their house in Paris. I met them on my way. "Were you coming to see us?" said Necker: "get into our carriage, and come to St Ouën." I accompanied them there. We were alone the whole evening with Germani, Necker's brother, and neither the husband nor the wife concealed from me their deep sorrow. I endeavoured to soothe it by speaking of the regret they would leave in the public mind, and of the just esteem which would follow them in their retreat; in which I did not flatter them. "I only regret," said Necker, "the good I had to do, and which I should have done, if time had been given me."

For my part, I said, in his situation, I saw nothing but an honourable retreat, an independent fortune, tranquillity, liberty, occupations of which he would have the choice, a society composed of those who are neither attracted by favour nor repelled by misfortune; and, in his home, all that retired and domestic life can have most grateful to a wise man. But I confess that I spoke from my own feelings, rather than from his; for I readily perceived that, without the occupation of public affairs, and the influence which they give, he could not be happy.

His wife appeared touched with the pains I took to lighten the impression which this blow had produced. Thus, my connection with them, very far from being weakened by this event, became the more intimate.

My wife, for my sake, returned their offers of friendship, and accepted their invitations. But she had an insurmountable aversion to M. Necker. She had come from Lyons under the persuasion that M. Necker was the cause of the disgrace of M. Turgot, the benefactor of her family. And, with respect to madame Necker, she did not find in her that inviting air which she herself had amongst her friends.

Very different and much more engaging was another lady of Geneva, the beautiful Vermenoux, the most intimate friend of M. and madame Necker. Since I had become acquainted with her, at the house of this couple, whom she had united, I had cultivated her friendship. But her affection for my wife, since my marriage, was a new tie upon us.

Madame de Vermenoux, at first sight, was the image of Minerva; but there soon shone on this commanding countenance that air of kind and gentle serenity, and that correct and innocent mirth which embellish reason, and make wisdom enchanting. The affection, which she and my wife mutually conceived for each other, was sympathy, if by sympathy you understand the perfect accord of minds, tastes, and morals. With what pleasure did this woman, habitually solitary, and naturally reserved, see us arrive at her country house at Sèves! With what joy did her soul resign itself to the sweets of intimacy, and cheerfully expand at the little suppers that we used to go and make with her at Paris! Still young enough to relish life, death snatched her from us. But, in regretting her, I have since discovered that, had her days been prolonged, they would only have been filled with sorrow and bitterness. A little later, and she would have lived too long.

Let us return to St Brice, and to the tender

interest that occupied my wife and myself there at that moment; it was her new pregnancy. The wholesome air, the exercise, the regular life of the country, had been favourable to her; and, winter having brought us back to Paris, she was there delivered of the finest of her children. Thus, with us, all seemed still to prosper; and, till then, nothing could be more grateful than the life we led.

'Atys,' in spite of envy, had the same success that 'Roland' had experienced: and the beautiful airs of these two operas, sung at the harpsichord, formed the delight of our society at the concerts of the countess d'Houdetot, and her sister-in-law, madame de la Briche.

The latter lady, well skilled in music, a charming singer, though her voice was feeble, had the rare modesty to assemble at her house talents that eclipsed her own; and, far from showing the least jealousy of them, she was the first to give them an opportunity to shine. A perfect knowledge of correctness, without any affectation, easy yet polite, free of her conversation, ingenuous yet gay, and a good narrator and speaker, she was simply and naturally engaging. Her language and style were pure and even elegant; susceptible, friendship itself not more so, nothing passionate ever interrupted the mildness and equality of her temperament. She was by no means the woman you would have selected in order to be strongly moved, but you would have chosen her for the enjoyment of social happiness.

In speaking of my old parties, I have said that I had met M. Turgot there; but, whether it be that our manners and characters did not sufficiently agree, or that my acquaintance with M. Necker displeased him still more, he had uniformly shown me a particular coldness. However, as an old friend of the abbé Morellet, he had been taking some interest in my marriage; and I was indebted to my wife for some marks of his kindness. I returned it with so

much the more respect, because he was disgraced, and because I saw that he felt his disgrace.

At the same time, I was losing successively my old friends. The Swedish ambassador, recalled home to his king to be his confidential minister, was removed from me for ever. The Neapolitan ambassador quitted us to go and be viceroy in Sicily. Both these separations were so much the more painful to me because they were to be lasting. Caraccioli's letters were full of regret. He perpetually invited me into Sicily with my family, offering to send me a vessel to Marseilles, in order to transport us to Palermo.

I have described my friendship for d'Alembert, and the value I set on his, during forty years. After the death of mademoiselle l'Espinasse, he was a prey to sorrow and melancholy. But occasionally he would comfort his heart's deep wound with some drops of the balm of this consoling friendship. It was, above all, with my wife that he loved to divert his cares: she took the tenderest interest in them. He and Thomas, the two men of letters whose talents and knowledge ought to have most overawed her, were those with whom she was most at her ease. She preferred no amusement to their conversation.

Thomas appeared to have still a long time to live for glory and friendship.

But d'Alembert began to feel the torments of the stone; and he shortly existed only to suffer and die slowly in the most excruciating anguish.

In a feeble sketch of his eulogy, I have essayed to paint the mild equality of his character, always true, always simple, because it was natural, removed from all concealment, "with a mixture of force and feebleness, but whose force was virtue, and whose feebleness was benevolent feeling."

In lamenting his loss, I was far from thinking of succeeding him in the place of perpetual secretary to the French Academy. I was myself on the point

of following him to the tomb, being seized with a malignant fever, similar to that of which Bouvard had already cured me, and from which he rescued me again. How infinitely should I bless the memory of a man to whom I have twice owed my life, and who, till the total failure of his strength and spirits, never ceased to bestow the tenderest cares on my children!

I had scarcely begun to recover, when I was obliged to go to Fontainbleau, to produce the new opera that I had written with Piccini. This opera was 'Didon.' As it was entirely my own, I had framed it to my mind; and, to make our new music advance a step farther, I had profited by the moment when a mark of favour, granted to Piccini, had given new life to his genius. I must tell you what had passed.

In the beginning of this year (1783), marshal Duras, gentleman in waiting of the king's chamber, asked me if I had written nothing new, and expressed his desire of having a good opera to represent before the queen as a novelty at Fontainbleau. "But," said he, "I should wish it to be your work. You do not gain enough credit by your exertions to give a graceful and pleasing dress to Quinault." In this language I recognised my brother-member of the Academy, and his former kindness.

"Marshal," said I; "so long as my composer Piccini shall be discouraged as he now is, I can promise nothing. You know with what madness his enemies disputed his success in 'Roland' and 'Atys;' these pieces have both been fortunate; and so far true, talent has triumphed over cabal; but in 'Iphigénie en Tauride' he has sunk under oppression, although he had there surpassed himself.

"The director of the opera-house at Nismes, to augment his receipts by the competition of the two parties, conceived the project of making Gluck and Piccini contend for the palm on the same subject; he furnished them two poems of 'Iphigénie en Tauride.'

Gluck, in the barbarous poem that fell to his lot, has found horrors analogous to the energy of his style, and has expressed them powerfully. The poem given to Piccini, ill conceived as it was, appeared susceptible of a milder interest; and, by means of the corrections which the author had made in it under my direction, it might furnish scenes for affecting music. But, after the strong impression which Gluck's ferocious opera had made on the eyes and ears of the public, the emotions produced by Piccini's opera seemed light and trivial. Gluck's 'Iphigénie' has the full possession of the theatre; that of Piccini is forgotten; he is disheartened; and you alone, marshal, can raise him from his dejection."—"How can that be effected?" asked he.—"By doing something very easy and very just," I answered. "By changing into a pension for life, the annual gratification that was promised him, when he was engaged to come to France."—"Most willingly," replied the marshal; "I will ask this favour for him of the queen, and hope to obtain it."

He asked, it was granted; and, when Piccini went with me to thank him, "It is to the queen," said he, "that you must show your gratitude, by writing a good opera for her this year."

"I should be very glad to do so," said Piccini to me on our return: "but what opera shall we write?" —"We must write," answered I, "the opera of 'Didon:' I have long since conceived the plan. But I warn you that, in this work, I shall choose to give the reins to my fancy, that you will have long scenes to set to music, and that in these scenes I shall require from you a recitative as natural as simple declamation. Your Italian cadences are monotonous: speech is more varied, more nervous in its accents, and I shall intreat you to note it as I shall declaim it to you."—"Well," said he; "we shall see." Thus was formed the design of giving to recitative that facility,

that truth of expression, which was so favourable to the playing of the celebrated actress for whom the part of Didon was destined.

We were pressed for time: I wrote the poem very rapidly; and, to steal Piccini from the interruptions of Paris, I engaged him to come and work with me at my country house; for I had purchased a very agreeable one, where we lived assembled *en famille* during the summer months. On arriving, he began to compose; and when he had finished, the actress who was to play the part of Didon, St Huberti, was invited to come and dine with us. She sang her part from one end to the other at sight, and expressed it so well that I fancied I saw her on the stage.

She was going on a journey into Provence: she insisted on taking her part with her to study it as she went along; and, during her absence, we were occupied with the rehearsals. It was then that I suffered that malady which brought me so near the tomb. When it became necessary for me to go to Fontainbleau, I had not recovered my strength, and my wife, still alarmed for my health, chose to accompany me.

It was there that, in dining at madame de Beauveau's, I first heard the design my friends had formed of obtaining for me that place of secretary of the Academy, which d'Alembert had rendered so difficult to fill after him.

This difficulty, which might have well intimidated the vainest man, was not the only one that withheld me. The place required an assiduity, of which I believed myself incapable. It was then very sincerely that I refused the honour they were pleased to pay me. But they opposed to me motives to which I thought myself obliged to yield; and it was decided that I should be of the number of candidates for this place. But I determined not to solicit it.

Circumstances were favourable to me for the suffrages of the court. The success of 'Didon' was complete; and to the eulogies that were passed on the

music of Piccini was added some praise for the author of the poem. "It is the only opera" said the king, "that ever interested me." He commanded it twice

I was touched with this success; my wife enjoyed it, and her enjoyment was what most interested me. Our journey had for her an inexpressible charm. The walks in the forest, the hunting parties, the races, the parties of pleasure to Tomeri, where they gave us sumptuous *matelottes* for dinner, and excellent grapes for our dessert, the theatre every day of performance, the box of madame d'Angiviller, whose house was our own, and who vied with her husband in gracefully turning the attention of the numerous and distinguished company with which her drawing-room was incessantly thronged, upon us; in short all the pleasures that a young and magnificent court could unite, and all that could personally prove to my wife that she was esteemed and beloved in the society that surrounded the court,—all this, I say, made our stay at Fontainbleau a scene of continued enchantment.

Two incidents however caused us some uneasiness; the first was an appearance of relapse, and some remains of the fever that I felt at the beginning of my journey. The court of physicians would have made a disease of it, if my wife had believed them. But, without any of their remedies, and by making me breakfast every morning on fine ripe grapes, she restored me to health. The other incident was the small-pox, which seized Albert, whom we had brought with us. But, the eruption not having shown itself till we were about to return, we set off instantly; and Albert was put under the hands of our friend Bouvard, who took the same care of him that he would have taken of his own child.

BOOK XI.

On our return to Paris, the French Academy having been summoned for the election of its perpetual secretary,—of twenty-four elective voices eighteen were united in my favour. My two competitors were Beauzée and Suard.

The success of 'Didon' was the same at Paris as it had been at court; and this opera formed our winter pleasures, as 'Roland' and 'Atys' had done in their novelty.

The old court banker, M. de la Borde, added his concerts to those of the countess d'Houdetot and of madame de la Briche: this was the occasion of my acquaintance with him.

He had two daughters, on whom nature had bestowed all the charms of face and voice, and who, being pupils of Piccini, rendered the expression of his songs more sweet and affecting.

Engaged by the invitations of M. de la Borde, I visited, and sometimes dined with him: I found him honourable, but simple, enjoying his prosperity without pride or boasting, and with an equanimity that is the more estimable because it is very difficult to be so caressed by fortune without a little giddiness. How many favours had heaven heaped upon him! Great opulence, a universal reputation for rectitude and loyalty, the confidence of Europe, unbounded credit; and, at home, six well-bred children, a wife of a prudent, mild, and lovely disposition, with decency and modesty that had nothing studied in them, exemplary in her attentions to her husband and children, in short, conduct such as envy itself found irreproachable.

"Che non trova l'invidia ove l'emende."—Ariosto.

What was wanting to the wishes of a man so completely happy? He has perished on the scaffold,

without any other crime than his riches, and with that multitude of honest men whom a wicked villain hurried to the grave. That dreadful calamity did not yet threaten us, and in my humble mediocrity I then thought myself happy. My country house had in summer still more charms for me than the town had ever had. A chosen society, composed to my wife's taste, came successively to vary our leisure, and enjoy with us that rustic opulence that our gardens afforded, where the espalier, the orchard, the vine-arbour, and the kitchen garden, furnished us with the fruits and vegetables of every season; presents with which nature covered gratuitously a frugal table, and which changed a moderate dinner into a delicious feast.

There reigned innocent mirth, confidence, a liberality of thought whose limits all knew, and which no one ever abused.

Shall I name to you all the guests that friendship assembled there? Raynal, the most affectionate, the most animated of old men; Silésia, that Genoese philosopher who resembled Vauvenargue; Barthélemi, who, in our walks, made us think of those of Plato with his disciples; Bréquigny, who had the same amenity and antique wisdom; Carbury, a man of all ages and all countries for the rich variety of his mind and knowledge; Boismont, a complete Frenchman in his manners, but singular for the contrast between his engaging qualities in society and his talents in the pulpit; Maury, prouder of diverting us with a pleasant story than of astonishing us by a trait of eloquence, and who, in company, made us forget the man of learning to show only the man of inviting converse; Godard, who had also a charming flow of gaiety full of wit; and de Seze, who soon came to give to our conversations a still bolder flight and new allurements.

"We are too happy," said my wife; "some misfortune will happen to us." She was very right.

Learn, my dear children, how near grief is to joy in every situation of life.

This kind and feeling mother had suckled her third child. He was a fine boy, in full health; we thought we had only to watch his growth and expanding beauty, when suddenly he was seized with a mortal stupor. Bouvard hastens to his aid; he exhausts the resources of art to find a remedy for this fatal drowsiness. The child had his eyes open; but Bouvard perceived that the iris was dilated: he passed a candle near it; the eyes and the eyelids remained motionless. "Ah," said he, "the organ of sight is palsied; the humour has attacked the brain; there is now no remedy;" and saying these words, the good old man wept; he felt the blow which smote a father's heart.

In that cruel moment, I would have removed the mother. But, on her knees, by the bed of her child, her eyes filled with tears, her arms extended to heaven, suffocated by her sobs: "Let me," said she; "ah! let me at least receive his last sigh." And how her sobs, her tears, her cries redoubled when she saw him expire! I say nothing of my own grief, I can think only of hers. It was so acute that, for many years, she could not bear to hear its object named. If she spoke of it herself, it was only in confused terms: "since my misfortune," would she say; unable to bring her tongue to articulate, "since the death of my child."

In the sad situation in which my mind was, with what could I occupy myself that was not analogous to maternal love and conjugal tenderness? My heart full of those feelings of which I had before me the most affecting model, I conceived the design of the opera of 'Pénélope.' This subject seized on me; the more I meditated, the more I thought it susceptible of great musical effect and theatrical interest.

I wrote with ardour, and all the illusion that a pathetic subject can create in him who portrays the picture. But it was this illusion that deceived me. I first persuaded myself that the fidelity of conjugal love would have on the lyric stage as much interest as the intoxication and despair of Didon's love; I persuaded myself too, that a subject rich in situations, pictures, and theatrical effects, all would be executed as I had conceived; and that the correspondent parts, the probabilities, the dignity of the action would be observed just as I had traced them to bad decorators and awkward actors. The contrary happened; and, in the most interesting moments, all illusion was destroyed. Thus the beautiful music of Piccini lost almost all its effect. Saint Huberti sustained it, as admirable in the part of Pénélope as she had been in that of Didon. But, though she was applauded as often as she was on the stage, she was so feebly supported, that neither at court nor at Paris had this opera the success which I had flattered myself it would have experienced. And the fault was mine: I ought to have known on what inept people I made the success of such a work depend, and not to have reckoned on it, after what I have said of 'Zémire and Azor.'

I was not happier in the choice of a subject for a comic opera, that I had written with Piccini for the Italian theatre; and when I think of it, I can scarcely conceive how I was seduced by the 'Dormeur Eveillé,' which in the Thousand and One Nights might be amusing, but which had nothing comic in it. For the true comic consists in playing with a ridiculous character; and that of Assan is not so.

In general, after success we should expect to find the public more difficult and severe. This is a reflection which I did not sufficiently weigh: I became more confident when I ought to have been more timid; and at the theatre my vanity was punished by disgrace.

I experienced more indulgence at the public assemblies of the Academy: there I by no means courted applause; I spoke only to discharge the simple duties of my place, or to supply the absent. If I sometimes paid the tribute due to a man of letters, it was without ostentation. The literary pieces that I read there had nothing brilliant, but they had nothing ambitious. They were the fruit of my studies and reflections on taste, on language, on the caprices of custom, on style, on eloquence; subjects suited to the spirit of an auditory composed of academicians, and of those who were accustomed to hear such discourses. Thus the auditory was always kind; and I fancied myself in a circle of friends.

The favour which I enjoyed in our public assemblies, joined to the exact discipline I imposed, without any partiality, in our private sittings, gave me some weight there and considerable credit. The clergy were grateful to me for the respect that was shown them; the high nobility were not less satisfied with the customary honours that were paid to them by my example; and with respect to men of letters, they knew I was so jealous of academic equality, that they left to me the care of restoring its rights if any one had forgotten them. Many even, persuaded that in our elections I sought only what was best, would consult and vote with me. Thus, without courting favour and without intrigue, I had some influence, which I employed, as justice prompted, to conquer the obstacles that were eagerly opposed to the election of one of my friends.

The abbé Maury, in his youth, having with great success pronounced the panegyric of Saint Louis before the French Academy at the Louvre, and afterwards that of Saint Augustin at the assembly of the clergy of France; having become famous in the pulpit of Paris, and called to preach before the king at Versailles, during Christmas and Advent; had acquired incontestable claims to the French Academy;

and he did not dissemble that such was the object of his ambition.

It was then the rumours of calumny rose against him; and, as they were intended for the ears of the Academy, his enemies took care to address them directly to its secretary. I listened to all the ill that they were pleased to tell me of him; and when I had patiently heard the whole, taking him aside; "You are attacked," said I; "and it is my duty to defend you; but you must furnish me with arms to repulse your enemies." I then apprised him minutely of all the improprieties that were attributed to him. He listened to me without being disconcerted; and, with a facility that astonished me, refuted these accusations, demonstrating the falsity of some, and putting me in the way of verifying the rest myself.

The only one that he could at first but vaguely deny, because it was vague, was brought against him by an academician who accused him of perfidy and bitter calumny. The accuser was la Harpe, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy.

"Since he accuses me of perfidy," said the abbé Maury, "I should have a right to demand his proof. I will not insist on that; and I will myself undertake to prove that he calumniates me, provided he will explain himself, and articulate the facts. Confront me with him."

I proposed this interview; which the accuser accepted. But I did not wish to be the only witness and arbiter; and, inviting them both to dine with me, I requested their permission to admit to this dinner two academicians, who were most renowned for integrity and prudence, M. Thomas, and M. Gaillard.

The dinner passed peacefully and decently. But, when we had quitted the table and were all five retired to my cabinet, "Gentlemen," said I, to our two arbiters, "M. de la Harpe thinks he has reason to complain of M. l'abbé Maury. The latter affirms

that the complaint is unfounded. We are to hear them. Speak, M. de la Harpe; you shall be listened to in silence; and with the same attention M. l'abbé Maury shall then be heard."

The accusation was serious. It concerned a satire which the abbé Maury had advised a Russian, the friend of la Harpe, to write against him, during the time that all three were on terms of intimacy. The count de Schouvalof, the only witness that la Harpe could have produced, was gone back into Russia; and, as he could not be heard, he could not be refuted.

The abbé Maury, in his defence, was therefore reduced to discuss the accusation in itself, and to demonstrate by the attendant circumstances that it belied itself. And he did this with so much order, precision, clearness, and with a presence of mind and of memory so marvellous, that we were confounded. In fine, in this discussion, he pressed his adversary so closely, and with so much vigour, that the latter stood mute. The unanimous opinion of the three witnesses was, then, that la Harpe had no just cause of complaint against the abbé Maury; and there was an appearance of reconciliation between them, in our presence.

"I do not the less believe," said la Harpe to me, "what my friend Schouvalof has certified to me."—"You may believe it," I replied; "but, as an honest man, you have no longer any right to say it; and, without reckoning my own opinion, that of two men so just, so impartial, as Thomas and Gaillard, ought to impose silence on you. For myself, if I should hear your complaints repeated in society, you must not be offended at my recounting what has just passed at my own house."

I took the same care to clear up all the other facts imputed to the abbé Maury. I found them all imaginary, and not only void of proof but destitute of probability. From that moment, it was in vain for

his enemies to persist in speaking ill of him to me; I answered that, in praise as in satire, gratuitous epithets proved only the vileness of the flatterer, or the malice of the calumniator; I even defied the malevolent to articulate a single fact that I should not be able to overthrow; and, with all my credit, I engaged my brother members to recompense a great mind for a gross persecution, by receiving him into the Academy. He was elected, and from that time nothing was more intimate than our mutual friendship.

The character of the abbé Maury was marked by an excess of energy and vehemence that he could with difficulty restrain, but which he suffered me to moderate. When I perceived any impetuous emotion to repress, I blamed him with a frankness that sometimes heated, but never irritated him. He was violent yet gentle, and as just as sensitive.

One day, in his impatience, he told me that I too much abused the ascendancy I had acquired over him. "I have not, nor will I have," said I, "any other ascendancy over you than that of reason animated by friendship; and, if I use it, it is only to prevent you from injuring yourself. I know the goodness and rectitude of your heart; but you have too much fire and too much ardour in your head. Your mind is not ripe, and that sap which constitutes its power requires tempering. You know with what pleasure I praise in you all that is praiseworthy; with the same sincerity, I will blame in you what is culpable; and, when I conceive that a harsh truth is necessary to you, I esteem you too highly to think there is any need to soften it. Besides, it is thus that I understand friendship. If the condition displease, you have only to say so, I will cease to indulge it." He answered only by embracing me.

"This is not all," resumed I; "this severity, which I consider it as my duty to observe with you, is likewise one from you to me; you have defects

that are natural to strength, and mine are those of debility. The temper of your mind may give to mine more vigour and elasticity, and I desire you to pass over nothing in me that savours of faintness and timidity. Thus, as occasion may offer, I shall be able to give you counsels of prudence and moderation, and you will repay me in lessons of resolution, courage and firmness." The convention was reciprocal, and thus were dispelled the clouds that self-love or vanity would have raised.

The same year that my friend was received into the Academy, it lost Thomas, one of its most illustrious members, and one of the most estimable of men, for the integrity of his morals, and the excellence of his writings.

Integrity—an equally irreproachable life. The eulogy is rare, my children! and who has merited this eulogy better than Thomas? It is very true, that a part of it was due to nature. He was born prudent, and he possessed the prudence adapted to each stage of life. Temperate, sober and chaste, none of the vices of effeminacy, of luxury, or of voluptuousness had access to his mind. No violent passion ever disturbed its tranquillity; he knew nothing of sensual pleasures but those which are innocent, and these again he enjoyed with an extreme reserve. All the force and vigour that the organ of thought and feeling had in him were united in one point, the love of truth, justice, virtue, and of fame. This was the mover, the main-spring of his soul, and the nurse of his eloquence.

He lived in the social world, without ever resigning himself either to its frivolous taste or to its vain amusements: he made allowance for weakness, though he himself had none. Alive to friendship, he cultivated it with care; but he wished it to be moderate; he cherished its ties; he would have dreaded its chain: it occupied the intervals of his labours and studies, but it stole nothing from them;

and a silent solitude had for him charms that he often preferred to the intercourse of friends. He suffered himself to be loved, and as much as you chose; but his own love was always measured.

In common society, he appeared timid; he was only indifferent. Conversation rarely fixed his attention. Were he tête-à-tête, or in a little circle where he could discuss some of the subjects that he had meditated, he astonished by the elevation and abundance of his ideas, and by the dignity of his eloquence. But in the crowd he hid himself, and his mind seemed then to retire from the public eye. At light and mirthful pleasantry, he would sometimes smile; he never laughed. He looked at women only as a cold observer, as a botanist looks at the flowers of a plant, never as an amateur of beauty and grace. So that the women used to say his eulogies flattered less than the passionate and vehement abuse of Rousseau.

Thomas was by disposition and principle a stoic, whose virtue would only have needed great trials. He would have been, I am persuaded, a Rutilius in exile, a Thraseas or a Seranus under Tiberius, better than a Seneca under Nero, and a Marcus Aurelius on the throne. But, living in a time of calm, and under the reign of moderation, fortune refused him both her high favours and her extremes of rigour. His prudence and modesty had not to defend themselves against any of the seductions of prosperity; nor was his constancy tried by any adversity. Free, exempt from the cares to which we expose ourselves by becoming husbands and fathers, he was proved by none of the great interests of nature. Isolated as much as a simple individual can be in social life, he had not even an enemy that was worthy of his anger.

It is only from his writings that you can form a high idea of his character. It is there that you find throughout, the stamp of a correct heart, and of an elevated mind; there the courage of truth, the

love of justice, and the eloquence of virtue show themselves.

The French Academy laid the foundation of his reputation, by proposing the eulogies on our great men for the prize of eloquence. No one in that career could outstrip, or even equal him, and he surpassed himself in the eulogium on Marcus Aurelius. Elevation and depth were the characteristics of his mind. No orator ever better grappled with, or better dived into his subjects. Before he commenced his eulogy, he began by studying the profession, the employment, or the art, in which his hero had signalized himself: and thus he rehearsed the praises of Maurice of Saxony like a learned soldier; of Duguay-Trouin like a sailor; of Descartes like a mathematician; of d'Aguesseau like a lawyer; of Sully like a statesman; of Marcus Aurelius like a moral philosopher,—Thomas being equal in wisdom to Apollonius or Marcus Aurelius himself. It is thus that, in designing only a preface to his eulogies, he composed, under the name of Essays, a most learned and beautiful treatise on historical morality, on the subject of the panegyrics that have been written in all times with more or less justice and truth, according to the manners of the age and the genius of the orators: a work which has not the celebrity it merits.

You may conceive that a continual tension and a monotonous loftiness were the defects of his writings. His eloquence wanted that which constitutes the charm of Fénélon and Massillon in prose, and of Virgil and Racine in verse; the flow of a sensitive mind, and the interest it excites. His style was grave and commanding, but did not bewitch. It had all the character of masculine beauty; women would have desired some features of their own. He possessed copiousness and magnificence, but neither variety nor ease, nor ever the undulating pliancy of the graces; and that which for a moment excited admiration, became at length fatiguing and painful.

He has been particularly reproached for exhausting his subjects, and for leaving nothing to the fancy of the reader; which might be in him a want of taste and address, but which nevertheless was a very rare species of abundance.

At a time when I should myself have so much needed a rigid and sincere censor, Thomas, much younger than I, had chosen me for his. I praised him with frankness, and often even with transport; but I did not conceal from him that I should have wished for more moderation, and less monotony in his style. "You touch but one chord," said I; "it is true that it gives exquisite sounds; but are they varied enough?" He would listen to me with a modest and melancholy air, and perhaps would say to himself that my criticism was just. But the austerity of his morals had communicated itself to his eloquence; to render it more supple, he would have feared to enervate it.

It was not my fault that he did not employ more usefully the years he gave to his poem of the 'Czar.' I showed him clearly that his poem would want unity and interest in its action, and, in recalling to his mind all the models of epic poetry; "Homer," said I, "has sung the anger of Achilles in the Iliad; and the return of Ulysses to Ithaca in the Odyssey; Virgil, the foundation of the Roman empire; Tasso, the deliverance of the Holy City; Milton, the fall of man; Voltaire, the conquest of France, by Henri de Bourbon, the heir of the Valois; and what are you going to sing? What event, what principal action will be the form of your recitals? You will recount the travels of the Czar, his war with Charles the Twelfth, the disobedience and death of his son, all factions destroyed in his states, military discipline established in his armies, arts and sciences transplanted into his empire, the city of Petersburgh founded on the shores of the Baltic; and these are indeed materials for an historical poem,

or for oratory and panegyric; but I by no means discover in them the single and simple subject of an epic." He confessed that my objection was unanswerable; but if he had not, he said, a dramatic action to compose and decompose, he had in the Czar a very great character to paint. Before he consulted me, he had already composed four cantos of the travels of the Czar in Holland, England, France, and Italy. This magnificent vestibule contained great beauties, he hoped to find the means of completing the edifice. He at length recognised that he had attempted an impossibility; and, at the end of nine years, he expressed his regret at not having followed the advice I gave him to abandon his enterprise.

A project that I know he had, and which he would have executed most admirably, was to write, on the history of France, discourses similar to those of Bossuet, on universal history. He would not have had, like Bossuet, the advantage of giving to events a mysterious chain in the order of providence. But, without deviating from political and moral order, he would have drawn from them salutary lessons and important results.

Thomas has left behind him a high opinion of his talents and virtues, rather than a brilliant fame; and he should be reckoned among illustrious, rather than celebrated writers. Women contribute essentially to celebrity, and he had not their suffrage.

The same year in which Thomas died, I had the gratification to see the Academy receive as its member the abbé Morellet, with titles less brilliant than the abbé Maury, but not less solid: an accurate, firm, enlightened mind, nourished with sound literature, and full of rare knowledge on objects of public utility, he was distinguished by writings of a sage and pure style, of severe reasoning and exact method. He was known too as the author of works of another kind, written in an excellent tone of pleasantry,

full of taste, and of a most delicate and pointed wit. Lucian, Rabelais, and Swift, had taught him how to handle irony and raillery, and their disciple was become their rival. Thus, my dearest friends were seated at my side, and replaced in the Academy those I lost every year.

Seeing this multitude of literary men successively sink into the tomb, I reflected that I might soon follow them, and that it was time to think of my literary will, and to choose what I should wish to remain when I should be no more. It was in this spirit that I published the edition of my works. I have said enough of them in my prefaces; it only remains to indicate the occasion and intention of some of my writings.

During the time that d'Alembert was secretary of the French Academy, he was earnestly desirous to infuse an interest into our public assemblies, as well as those of our private sittings, at which sovereigns were present. No one contributed to this interest so much as himself. Sometimes, however, his own efforts did not suffice, and it was a real grief to him to see himself abandoned. He would then recur to me, complaining of the neglect of so many men of letters, who composed the Academy, and entreating me to aid him to sustain the credit of the institution.

On these pressing occasions, I composed pieces of poetry, or prose, which I adapted to the circumstances; such as the three discourses in verse, On Eloquence, On History, On the Hope of Fame After Death. This last, read at the reception of Ducis, Voltaire's successor, had at least the merit of pertinence, and made a lively impression on the assembly.

Of the pieces of prose which I read, that with which the public appeared most pleased was the eulogy on Colardeau, at the reception of la Harpe. But what touched myself much more was, the success of a sketch of the eulogy on d'Alembert, and that of the little poem on the death of prince Leo-

pold of Brunswick. On this latter, I think I should take permission to go into some detail, in order to explain my conduct clearly. The trait of humanity and heroic devotion of the young prince Leopold of Brunswick having sensibly affected the young count d'Artois, this prince had proposed to the French Academy a prize of one hundred and twenty guineas for that poem in which this noble action should be most worthily celebrated. I was then perpetual secretary to the Academy, and, in my quality of judge, it was forbidden me to present myself as a competitor. But, as it very often happened that, even the prize of poetry, the subject of which was left free and at the choice of the poets, was not granted, I was very uneasy lest nothing worthy should be offered; and then what shame, and what humiliation for French literature! With what pain would the Academy confess to all Europe that so fine a subject had inspired no poet!

As I was impressed and strongly moved by it, I could not resist the desire of treating it myself, firmly resolved not to let my work be known, till after it should be decided that no other merited the prize.

I therefore waited till all the poems that were sent had passed under the eyes of the Academy; and they were all rejected. At last, seeing that every member lamented that the most virtuous heroism should not be worthily praised, I confided to the Academy the essay I had made, without aspiring to the prize. The Academy was pleased to approve it; and the count d'Artois, to whom the ill success of the competition was necessarily announced, learned at the same time what one of the members had done to supply the deficiency. The prince ordered that the same prize should be offered for the following year; but he desired to be acquainted privately with my work, and permitted me to send it to the reigning prince of Brunswick.

A few days afterwards, the count d'Artois sent me word, by M. de Vaudreuil, that he had ordered for me a very rich gold box. I answered, that on every other occasion I should receive with respect any present from the king's brother; but that on this I could accept nothing which might make me suspected of having courted reward; that this rich box would only be a prize in disguise; that if the prince had the kindness to give me one of paper, with his portrait on it, I should receive it as a most precious gift; but that I would have no other. M. de Vaudreuil insisted; but he saw me so firm in my resolution that he gave up all hope of shaking it; and this was the answer which he carried back to the count d'Artois. "Marmontel consults decorum only for himself," said the prince; "but it does not become me to make him a mean present;" and, after having reflected a moment, "Well," resumed he; "I will give him my portrait at full length." The *bailli* de Crussol, the gentleman of his chamber, was ordered to get a good copy made, and the frame of it was decorated with attributes most honourable to me.

The reigning prince of Brunswick did not receive my homage less favourably; he answered it by a letter written with his own hand and full of kindness, to which were added two gold medals struck in memory of his virtuous brother.

It was about this time that, during her fourth pregnancy, my wife agreed with me on the necessity of taking a house to ourselves. But, as the separation took place with the kind consent of her uncles and mother, we removed from them as short a distance as possible. My wife was not insensible to the pleasure of finding herself at home, mistress of her own house. For myself, I felt, I confess, great comfort in living with the abbé Morellet in complete independence; and he himself was much more at his ease with me. He had introduced into his house another niece, young,

lovely, full of wit and accomplishments, now madame Chéron, to whom my wife resigned her apartment. Thus all passed with the best understanding.

What rendered our situation still more agreeable was the ease we derived from an increase of fortune. Without speaking of the profits of my works, and these profits were considerable, the place of secretary to the French Academy, joined with that of historiographer of the royal buildings, which my friend M. d'Angiviller had procured for me on the death of Thomas, were annually worth one hundred and twenty guineas. My assiduity at the Academy doubled my fees there for personal attendance. I had inherited, on the death of Thomas, half the pension of eighty guineas which he had enjoyed, and which was divided between Gaillard and myself, as that of le Batteax had been. My lodgings of secretary at the Louvre, and of historiographer at Versailles, which I had chosen to let, brought me together seventy-two guineas. I had one hundred and twenty on the 'Mercure.' Some of the money I had saved was advantageously vested in the enterprise of Swan Island; that which I had put in the customs of the city of Lyons raised me legal interest, as well as other sums which I had placed elsewhere. I therefore found myself enabled to live comfortably at Paris and in the country; and from that time I charged myself solely with the expense of Grignon. My wife's mother, her cousin, and her uncles, had each their room there whenever they chose to come; but they were my visitors.

I indulged myself with a carriage, that three times a week, in an hour and a half, took me from my country house to the Louvre; and, after the sitting of the Academy brought me back from the Louvre to my country house.

From that period till the epoch of the revolution, I cannot express the attraction and charm we experienced in life and social intercourse. My wife was

happily delivered of her fourth child. M. and madame d'Angiviller had stood godfather and godmother; they had made quite a *fête* of this christening, and had manifested on the occasion the liveliest testimonies of tender friendship. Their godson Charles became as dear to them as if he had been their own child.

Shortly afterwards, we made the fortunate acquisition of another society of friends in M. and madame de Seze. My wife found in madame de Seze all that can enchant in a sweet disposition: they therefore felt for each other that inclination which arises from the conformity of two benevolent and virtuous minds. With respect to M. de Seze, I do not believe that there is on earth a man whose society is more desirable than his. Lively, ingenuous, inviting and witty; a natural eloquence, that, even in the most familiar conversation flows in a copious stream; a quickness, a correctness of thought and expression, which at every moment seems inspired; and, better than all, an open heart, full of rectitude, sensibility, kindness, and candour: such was the friend that the abbé Maury had long taught me to desire, and that the vicinity of our country houses procured me.

From Brevane, where de Seze in the summer season passed his leisure hours, to Grignon, there was scarcely more than the Seine to pass and the plain which it waters; our two rising hills were facing each other. A young man to whom we were attached, and who esteemed us both, confided to us respectively the desire we mutually felt to become acquainted with each other. From our very first interview, to see, to enjoy, to cultivate each other's friendship, to desire to meet again, were simultaneous effects; and, distant as we now are, this attachment is the same. At least, on my side, nothing in my solitude has more occupied me or more interested me than he. De Seze is one of those rare men of whom it may be said, you must love him if you

have not loved him already; and when you shall have once loved him, you must love him for ever. "*Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit; qui jam amavit, cras amet.*" (Catul.)

The young man who had interested himself to unite us, was that Laborie, celebrated from the age of nineteen, for writings that would easily have been attributed to maturity of mind and taste; a new friend, who of his own accord and by the impulse of an ingenuous and feeling mind, had come to present himself to me, and whom I had soon learned to esteem and foster.

In this engaging and happy man, the desire of rendering himself useful is an habitual and reigning passion. Full of ardour for all that he thinks virtuous, the quickness of his action equals that of his imagination. I never knew any one so economical of his time: he divided it into minutes, and every instant of it was employed either usefully to himself or, more frequently, usefully to his friends.

The change of ministers again brought me some accession of fortune.

The salary of the historiographer of France, which had formerly been one hundred and twenty guineas, had been reduced to seventy-two, by I know not what miserable economy. The comptroller-general d'Ormesson thought it just to put it on its ancient footing.

It is well known that M. de Calonne, when he became minister of finance, declared his contempt for a narrow parsimony. He particularly wished that the labours of literary men should be honourably recompensed. In my quality of perpetual secretary of the French Academy, he sent for me. He expressed to me his intention of patronising the Academy; asked me whether there were any salaries annexed to it, as there were to the Academy of Sciences, and to that of Belles-lettres; I answered, that there were none. What might the fees for personal attendance amount to, with the most assiduous? I assured

him that it could not exceed thirty or thirty-five guineas, each fee being but fifteen-pence. He promised to double it. He desired to know what was the salary of the secretary; I answered that it was fifty pounds. He thought it too little. He therefore obtained the king's permission to make the fee for being present half-a-crown, and to raise the salary of the secretary to one hundred and twenty guineas. Thus my revenue from the Academy might amount to a hundred and eighty pounds or guineas.

I again obtained a new degree of favour and new hopes under the ministry of M. de Lamoignon, keeper of the great seal. The occasion of it was this.

One of the projects of this minister was to reform public instruction, and to render it flourishing. But as he had not himself the knowledge necessary to form a plan and system of studies that should fulfil his intentions, he consulted the abbé Maury, for whom he had much esteem and friendship. The abbé, not thinking himself sufficiently informed on a subject which he had not particularly studied, advised him to apply to me, and the minister begged him to engage me to call on him. In the conversation that we had together, I saw that in general he conceived like a statesman, and in its full extent, the project I had formed. But the difficulties, the means, the details were not sufficiently known to him. To assure us both whether I had comprehended his plan, I begged his permission to develope it in a memorial which I would lay before him; but I observed to him, that in reforms nothing appeared to me more to be feared than the ambition of destroying and innovating everything; that I had much respect for ancient institutions; that I willingly deferred to the lessons of experience; and that I considered the abuses and errors of times past as weeds that mix with the pure grain, and which should be rooted out with a light and prudent hand, that the harvest may not be injured.

My memorial was divided into eight principal heads: the distribution of the schools and of the objects of instruction according to general utility, or local convenience; the establishments relative to both these objects; the discipline; the method; the gradual advancement and well-proportioned relation between the different classes; the general inspection; the means of encouragement; the knowledge and the employment of those who should have completed their studies.

In the whole, and in the details of this vast composition, I had taken as my model the institution of the jesuits, where all was submitted to one single rule, inspected, maintained, governed by one central authority, and put in action by one universal power. The greatest difficulty was to substitute for the tie of a religious society, and for the spirit which that tie excited, a motive of interest and spring of emulation that should reduce liberty to terms of obedience. For the morals and discipline to be established in the class of the masters, as well as that of the pupils, were necessarily to be the bias of this institution. It was requisite then that the places there should be desirable, not only in their actual state but for the prospect and hopes they encouraged; and, in order that exclusion or dismission should be a punishment, I required that the continuance and duration of these honourable functions should progressively have assured advantages.

The keeper of the seal approved my plan in all its parts; and, regarding that which might require encouraging rewards, he promised me that nothing should be spared. "No master, if he be a man of merit, shall grow old in obscurity," said he; "no scholar, distinguished in his course of studies, shall remain without employment. You undertake to make me acquainted, from every extremity of the kingdom, with the choicest talents; and I engage to appoint them. I see that we understand each other,"

added he, pressing my hand; "we shall agree together; I depend on you, Marmontel; do you likewise depend on me, and for life."

As the abbé Maury had assured me that the keeper of the seal was an upright and frank man, I had no difficulty in concluding with him the engagement which he proposed to me, and, in perfecting and completing the development of my plan, I thought I was labouring for his glory.

I had formed in the country an acquaintance, who in this work, furnished me with great and valuable hints.

My fifth child, Louis, was just born, and his mother was his nurse. The eldest of the three that were left me, Albert, was in his ninth year; and Charles had completed his fourth, when I resolved to have them educated at home; and, from the reputation of the school of St Barbe, I there chose a preceptor for them, formed to the morals and discipline of that establishment, as highly famed for the laborious and frugal life that was led there, as for the superiority of the powers with which its pupils were imbued.

The excellent young man whom I took, and whom death has removed from me (Charpentier) spoke incessantly in praise of St Barbe. For a remarkable singularity of that house was the affectionate remembrance that was preserved for it by those who had left it. He never spoke but with enthusiasm of the morals, the discipline, and the studies of St Barbe; and never but with the highest esteem of the superiors of the house, and of the masters he had quitted. They were his friends; he was desirous that I should make them mine. I permitted him to introduce them to me; and the cordiality with which I received them made my country-house agreeable to them.

St Barbe had a supplementary establishment at Gentilly, the adjoining village to Grignon. The

superiors and masters of both houses sometimes met, to come and dine with me. They interested themselves in the studies of my children. On the days when the young school at Gentilly had public exercises, my boys were invited to them, and were admitted to the examination. It was a good example for them, and an object of emulation. But to me it afforded matter of observation and suggestion: for in the easy, regular, and constant routine of the studies of St Barbe, I ought necessarily to trace some cause, and this cause could result only from a good and solid organization.

I took care to inform myself on the subject in the minutest detail; and, by means of these conferences, I imagined myself capable of giving the finishing touches to my plan of national instruction, when suddenly, by one of those commotions that overturned the ministry, M. de Lamoignon was dismissed, and exiled to Baville.

Soon after, the interests of the state, and anxiety for the fate of my country, occupied my mind; my private life changed its complexion, and assumed a colouring that will necessarily tinge the rest of these Memoirs.

BOOK XII.

I AM not writing the history of the revolution. "*Quæ contentio divina et humana cuncta permiscuit, eòque vecordiæ processit, uti studiis civilibus bellum finem faceret.*" (Sallust. Jug.) But, if the life of man be a journey, can I recount mine, without telling through what events, and by what torrents, what abysses, what wilds inhabited by tigers and serpents, it has passed? For it is thus that I retrace

our ten years of misfortunes, almost doubting whether it be not a violent and fatal dream.

This dreadful calamity will be described throughout in traits of blood: the remembrance of it is indelible. But it had causes the nature of which cannot be sufficiently observed; for the diseases of the political, resemble those of the human body: to judge with any semblance of probability where they will end, or what might have prevented them, it is necessary to recur to their origin; and it is thus that by the light of the past we may brighten the future.

Although the situation of public affairs, and the fermentation of the public mind in every branch of the state, had long appeared to threaten an approaching crisis, it is nevertheless true that it happened only from the imprudence of those who persisted in thinking it impossible.

The nation, constantly faithful to its laws, its kings, its ancient constitution, content through instinct with the portion of liberty, property, prosperity, glory and power which it enjoyed, did not the less hope for some salutary amendment in the vices and errors of the ancient administration.

This hope had above all acquired fresh vigour on the accession of Louis XVI to the crown. And indeed from that period, if the will of a young king, full of rectitude and candour, had been seconded as it ought to have been, all would have been repaired without any convulsion.

Louis XVI, raised to the throne at the age of twenty, brought with him a feeling, inestimable when moderate, and very dangerous when excessive,—the distrust of his own powers. The vice of his education had been the very reverse of that which is usually imputed to the education of princes: he had been too much intimidated; and while his elder brother, the duke of Burgundy, was living, he had been taught to feel too acutely, on the score of in-

tellect, the superiority which that truly premature prince had over him.

The situation of the dauphin, then, was the disquiet and perplexity of a mind that foresees its destiny and its duties, and dares not hope to be able to fulfil them, when he perceives himself suddenly charged with the government of an empire. His first feeling was alarm, at finding himself king at the age of twenty; his first impulse was to seek a man prudent and skilful enough to enlighten and guide him. Such men are always rare; and, to decide his choice, a choice then more difficult perhaps than ever, the young king took counsel of his family. Nothing could be more important, both to the state and to himself, than the advice that should result from this deliberation. It was to determine who should begin his political education, direct his views, and form his ductile mind; and in him nature had disposed all to receive the impressions of virtue. A clear understanding, a sound reason, a simple, ingenuous, and feeling heart; no vice, no passion, a contempt for luxury and ostentation, a hatred for falsehood and flattery, a thirst for justice and truth; and, with a slight tinge of roughness and severity in his character, that fund of rectitude and moral goodness which is the basis of virtue; in a word, a king twenty years old, weaned from himself, disposed to desire all that should be good and just; and around him a kingdom to regenerate in all its compartments, the greatest good to do, and the greatest evils to repair; this it was that awaited the confidential minister whom Louis XVI should choose for his guide. He selected the count de Maurepas (May 1774).

After having been in the ministry for thirty years, after a long exile and a still longer disgrace under the late king, for a very trivial fault, and for which the royal family had never been offended with him, Maurepas had acquired in his retreat that respect which age gives, and which unmerited misfortune

commands when sustained with credit. His former ministry had been marked only by the decay of the navy; but as the timid policy of cardinal Fleury had palsied that part of our forces, Maurepas might have been commanded to act as he did; and, his place being thus only nominal, and the statesman not required to act, he had had nothing to display but his natural qualities, the inviting ease of a man of the world, and the talents of a courtier.

Superficial, and incapable of any serious and profound application, but endowed with a facility of perception and intelligence that unravelled in an instant the most complicated business, he supplied in the council, by habit and dexterity, what he wanted in study and reflection. As accessible and mild as his father was harsh and abrupt; with a supple, insinuating, and flexible mind, fertile in stratagem for attack, in address for defence, in subterfuge to elude, in shifts to divert, in witticisms to disconcert the serious by his pleasantry, in expedients to extricate himself from the nicest and most threatening difficulties; a keen and rapid eye to seize on the foibles or follies of men; an imperceptible art to entice them to his trap, or lead them where he wished; an art, yet more formidable, of turning everything into ridicule, even merit itself, when he wished to undervalue it; in fine, the art of enlivening and simplifying the labours of the cabinet, made Maurepas the most seducing of ministers: and had it been requisite only to teach a young king to wield the sceptre lightly and adroitly, to make a mockery of men and things, and the duty of governing an amusement, Maurepas would have been, without any comparison, the man they ought to have chosen. Perhaps the royal family had hoped that age and misfortune would have given to his character more solidity, consistence, and energy: but naturally feeble, indolent, and selfish; fond of ease and quiet; desirous that his age should be honoured, but tran-

quil; avoiding everything that might interfere with the pleasure of his suppers or disturb his slumber; scarcely believing in strenuous virtue, and looking on the pure love of the public good as dupery or idle boasting; but little desirous of giving lustre to his ministry, and making the art of governing consist in conducting everything without noise, by consulting prudence rather than principle,—Maurepas was in his age what he had been in his early years, an engaging man, occupied with himself, and a courteous minister.

A vigilant attention to preserve his ascendancy over the mind of the king, and his predominance in the council, made him easily jealous even of the choices he had himself made, and this anxiety was his only passion that had any activity. For all besides, he had no elasticity, no vigour, no courage, either for good or ill; it was weakness without benevolence, malice without venom, resentment without anger, indifference to all that should happen after him. He might perhaps be sincerely desirous of the public good, when he could effect it without risking his own quiet; but this desire was instantly cooled when he perceived it would compromise either his credit or his repose. Such, till the last moment, was the aged minister who was chosen to guide and counsel the young king.

As it was easy for him to perceive that the basis of the character of this prince was frankness and benevolence, he first studied to appear to him benevolent and simple. The king did not disguise to him that excessive timidity which the first impressions of his childhood had left: Maurepas felt, therefore, that the surest way to captivate his good will was to render easy to him the duties at which he was alarmed. He employed the talent he possessed of simplifying the business of the state, in order to lighten for him its burden. But whether it be that he considered the inveterate evils as past all cure, or

that his indolence and levity had not permitted him to examine them, or that he neglected them as diseases arising from an excess of vigour and health, or as constitutional vices inherent in the body politic, —he avoided fatiguing the mind of the young king about them, assuring him that all would go well, provided all was prudently and moderately directed. The excuse of cardinal Fleury, in his pusillanimous anxiety, was, that an edifice which had lasted more than thirteen hundred years was necessarily bending towards its fall; and that, in propping it, great fears were to be entertained lest it should be shaken. The pretext of Maurepas, in his indolent security, was, on the contrary, that a kingdom so vigorously constituted required only its natural strength in order to recover, and that it should be left to subsist with its abuses and its vices.

But the disorder of the finances is not an evil that can be long palliated and dissembled; distress and discredit soon accuse the minister who conceals and neglects it; and, till the true remedy be found, it grows worse instead of healing.

The abbé Terrai had been recommended as a skilful minister to Louis XV. An employment of twenty years in the courts of law, amid a crowd of discontented suitors, had inured him to complaint, and accustomed him to blame; he thought himself obliged, by his profession, to be the object of public hatred. Maurepas removed him, and put in his place Turgot, equally commendable for his talents and his virtues.

The new minister felt strongly that a diminution in the expenditure, economy in the employment of the revenues, and in the expenses of collecting them, the abolition of all privileges burthensome to commerce and agriculture, and a more equal distribution of the taxes upon all classes, were the true remedies that should be applied to the state's deep wound; and of this a king who breathed only justice and love

for his people was easily persuaded. But Maurepas, seeing how much the esteem and confidence which Turgot inspired in the young king exceeded the bounds he wished to prescribe, was soon jealous of his own work, and eagerly hastened to destroy it.

In a country where so many people live by abuses and disorder, a man who introduces rule and economy into the finances, a man whom favour cannot bend or indulgence corrupt, must necessarily have for his enemies all those whom he has dissatisfied, and those who think themselves in danger. Turgot had too much boldness and candour in his character to stoop to the intrigues of a court: he was accused of uncompromising obstinacy and want of address; and ridicule, which with us degrades everything, having once attacked him, Maurepas felt he might easily be overthrown. He began by listening to, and by encouraging with a smile, the malice of the courtiers: and soon, he himself avowed that in Turgot's views there was more of the spirit of system than of the solid spirit of administration; that public opinion had erred respecting the skilfulness of this pretended sage; that his head was filled with idle speculations and philosophical dreams; no habit of business, no knowledge of men, no capacity for the management of the finances, no resources to provide for the pressing exigencies of the state; a system of perfection that was not of this world, and that existed only in books; a minute research after that ideal excellence at which we can never arrive; and, instead of the means of providing for the present, vague and fantastic projects for a distant future; a fund of ideas, but confused; great knowledge, but foreign to the object of his ministry; the pride of Lucifer, and in his presumption the most inflexible obstinacy.

These confidential observations of the old statesman, divulged from mouth to mouth, in order that they might reach the ear of the king, had the more success as they were not absolutely destitute of the

appearance of truth. Turgot was surrounded by studious men, who, having devoted themselves to the science of economy, formed a kind of sect, estimable, without doubt, as to the object of their labours, but whose emphatic language, sententious tone, and frequent chimeras, enveloped in an obscure and ridiculously figurative style, furnished food for pleasantry. Turgot favoured them, and showed them an esteem, which they themselves exaggerated by talking of it too loudly. It was therefore not difficult for his enemies to make him pass for the chief of the sect, and the ridicule affixed to the name of Economists rebounded on him.

Moreover, it was very true that, proud of the rectitude of his intentions, Turgot neither studied dexterity in the management of public business, nor suppleness nor attaching manners in his relations with the court. His reception was mild and polite, but cold. All were sure of finding him just, but inflexible, in his principles; and credit and favour could not brook the unshaken tranquillity of his refusals.

Although, in two years, by means of reduction and economy, he had considerably diminished the mass of debt with which the treasury was burthened, it was still thought that he treated as a chronical disease the exhaustion and ruin of the finances and of credit. The prudence of his regimen, his means of amelioration, the encouragement and relief which he gave to agriculture, the liberty he restored to commerce and industry, promised only slow success and tardy resource, while there were urgent demands for which it was requisite to provide.

His system of liberty for all kinds of commerce admitted in its extent neither of restriction nor limit; and with respect to the object of the first necessity, though even this absolute liberty should only have been attended with momentary dangers, the risk of suffering the chief resource of life to dry up for a

whole people, was not a risk to run without inquietude. The perseverance of Turgot to subject the commerce of grain to no kind of restriction, too much resembled obstinacy. It was by this that his credit in the opinion of the king received a mortal wound.

In a riot, that was excited on account of the dearness of bread, in 1775, the king, who still felt for him that esteem of which Maurepas was jealous, gave him his entire confidence, and left him full power to act. Turgot had not the policy to request that Maurepas might be called to this secret council, in which the king resigned himself to him; and besides, he had the imprudence to engage openly to prove that the riot had been commanded. Le Noir, the minister of the police, was dismissed, on suspicion of having connived with the authors of the plot. It is certain that the pillage of the bakers' shops had been effected quietly and undisturbed. The rioters had likewise a premeditated march, that seemed to indicate a plan; and as to the personage to whom Turgot attributed it, I would not dare to say that it was without reason.

The prince de Conti, a needy prodigal, full of the old spirit of La Fronde, caballing in the parliament in order to be feared at court, and accustomed in his demands to timid compliance, necessarily regarded a respect so firm as that of Turgot, to be offensive. It was possible therefore that, by a tumult among the people both in town and country, he might have wished to publish the scarcity, encourage alarm, and ruin in the king's opinion the unwelcome minister from whom he expected nothing. But, whatever truth there might be in this cause of the riot, Turgot was not able to produce the proof of it that he had promised: this false step decided his fall.

Maurepas persuaded the king that this invention of a chimerical plot was only the bad excuse of a vain man, who would neither confess nor relinquish his

error ; and that in a place that required all the precautions of a calculating mind, and all the suppleness of discretion, a man of system, stubborn and obstinate in his opinions, was not what he wanted.

Turgot was dismissed (May 1776), and the administration of the finances was confided to Clugny, who seemed to have succeeded only to spoil and plunder with his companions and mistresses, and who died in the ministry after four or five months of an impudent pillage, of which the king only was ignorant.

Taboureau took his place, and, like an honest man, soon confessed himself incapable of filling it. They had given him for an assistant, under the title of director of the royal treasury, a man whose superiority he himself recognised. His modesty honoured his retreat. And Necker succeeded him as director-general of the finances.

This Genevese, who has since been the sport of opinion, and so differently celebrated, was then one of the most renowned bankers in Europe. In this profession he enjoyed the public confidence and a most extensive credit. His talents had been tried; and, on subjects analagous to the administration of the finances, his writings had announced a wise and reflecting mind; but he had, with Maurepas, another merit, his hatred for Turgot. The cause of his hatred was as follows :

Turgot, on all that concerned commerce, industry, and agriculture, could not endure the prohibitory system of Colbert; he considered as a right, inherent in property, the unreserved liberty of disposing, each at his pleasure, of his possessions and his talents; he wished that personal interest should be left to consult and guide itself well, and that general good would result from the reciprocal action of private interests. Necker, more timid, thought that interest, in almost all men, had need of some moderator and guide ; that, till it should have learned the lessons

of experience, it would be wise to supply them by prudent regulations; that it was not to private cupidity that the care of the public good should be confided; that, if for the tranquillity and security of a whole nation, civil and moral liberty ought to be restrained and submitted to laws, it was just likewise that the liberty of commerce should be restricted, and even suspended, whenever the public safety was at stake; that property, in objects of the first necessity, was not so absolutely individual as to give to a part of the nation the right of letting the other perish; and that it would be as unjust to suffer them to rise to an excessive value as to keep them at too low a price: finally, that to permit the rich and sordid miser to dictate to the poor with too much sovereignty the hard law of necessity, would be to place the multitude at the mercy of the few, and that it belonged to the prudence and duty of administration to preserve the balance between them.

"Avarice," said Turgot, "need not be feared where liberty shall reign; and the way to insure abundance, is to leave to the objects of commerce a full circulation. Corn will be sometimes dear; but labour will be dear, and all will be on a level."

"When the price of corn rises progressively," said Necker, "it certainly will regulate the price of industry, as well as of all work, and no one will suffer from it; but when corn rises suddenly to an excessive price, the people must suffer for a considerable time before all can be on a due level."

In this system of legal inspection and restricted liberty, Necker had spoken in praise of Colbert; and this praise was approved. It was a double crime, which Turgot did not pardon. This zealous advocate for the liberty of commerce and industry believed himself infallible in his opinion; and uniformly attributing to it the character of evidence, he considered him as insincere who did not assent.

Till then, however, Necker had not developed his principles; but when Turgot proclaimed his law in favour of the free exportation of grain, not only from province to province but to foreign countries, and at all times, Necker took the liberty of telling him that he saw some danger in it, and that he had some observations to communicate to him on that branch of commerce that might perhaps merit his attention. These words roused Turgot's antipathy to the system of prohibitory laws. He answered, that on that subject his opinion was invariable; but that every man was free to give his sentiments on it, and to publish them.

Necker answered, that he had not had that intention, but that since he gave him the liberty to do so, he should perhaps make use of it. Some time afterwards appeared his book on laws relative to the commerce of corn; and, while this book was still in its novelty, happened the riot of which I have just spoken. Turgot concluded that one had contributed to the other,—although he well knew that the mob who pillage bakers' shops do not ask advice of books.

Turgot's friends, more irritated than he, would have persuaded him to revenge himself on Necker, by sending him back to Geneva: he could have done it, for he had still the entire confidence of the king. His rectitude and equity saved him from that disgrace; but he retained to the grave his hatred against a man whose only offence had been to have accepted his challenge, and combated his opinion.

From the moment that Necker assumed the direction of the finances, his care was to introduce light and order into the chaos he there found. Clugny had left an annual deficit of one million sterling, and at that time this deficit appeared enormous: it was necessary to provide for it. Necker discovered means for this provision. These means were, on one side, to simplify the collection of public revenues, and to

clear the channels through which they passed; on the other, to see what were the pretences for expenditure, and to reform their abuses.

The king, in order to be as economical as his minister, had only to defend himself against a too easy beneficence. It was therefore to preserve him from daily seductions that Necker persuaded him to suspend and defer, till the end of every year, the decision of the favours he should dispense, in order that he might see the whole sum before he made a distribution.

Thus Necker was securing, by simple economy, an overplus that would have enabled him to relieve the public treasury,—when the signal of war reminded him that he would need more abundant resources, both to form immediately a respectable navy, and to arm and provide for it. These urgent expenses were annually to amount to six millions and a quarter sterling. Credit alone could face them, and credit was lost · the mismanagement of the government had ruined it during the peace : it was requisite either to re-establish it, or to fall; for no tax, however burthensome, could suffice for the demands of an expensive war; and England, our enemy, could then borrow ten or twelve millions at a moderate interest. Necker has since been reproached with his loans; but this reproach should have been addressed to the war, which rendered them indispensable, and which itself was not so.

The art which Necker employed to raise and support credit was to restore confidence, by showing, in the balance which economy secured, a solid basis and a certain pledge for the loans he was about to open. The same plan that he had pursued for the savings of peace, served to procure him the funds which the war required. It was well known that he had perpetually under his eyes complete and precise statements of the situation of the finances, and, as it were, the balance in hand in all his operations, in

order that his engagements might never exceed his resources. It was with this spirit of order that, having found public credit destroyed after a peace of fifteen years, he had been able to re-establish it in the midst of a war that demanded the greatest efforts, and that, in spite of the deficit of 1776, in spite of the expenses of this war and above seventeen millions borrowed to support it, he was in a situation to announce to the king, in 1781, in the account he presented to him, that the ordinary revenues then exceeded, by four hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds, the ordinary and annual expenses of the state. This was telling England that, without any new tax, and even without any new economy, France could procure funds for two campaigns; for four hundred thousand pounds of revenue, unemployed, sufficed to conclude a loan of eight millions,—a result very capable of hastening a good peace. Necker was nevertheless taxed with vanity for having published this account.

In a skilful minister, this open manner of exposing his operations, and the state of public affairs, has doubtless its advantages; and its success is infallible amongst a reflecting and studious people. But for a light people, who judge of men and things on bare assertion and without examination, this method has its dangers; and Necker must have well foreseen them. There is no safety in taking such a public for your judge, except when the objects you present to its view are of palpable evidence; and, for the multitude, financial statements will never have that clearness. No man, in society, will perplex himself with calculations. It is therefore very easy to disturb opinion on the accuracy of an account; and, from the instant doubt rises, it is a cloud that malignity never fails to swell and blacken. Necker, in doing an exemplary thing for future ministers, satisfactory for the king, awful to England, encouraging for the nation, and heartening to credit, did

therefore a very bold and perilous thing with respect to himself.

I saw him, at that time, fortified with vouchers; every article in his account was supported by them; public esteem seemed to decide that it was not requisite to produce them, and the first impulse of opinion was for him, and entirely to his glory.

But, as soon as there appeared a man confident enough to attack him, this accuser was welcomed by envy and malevolence with full favour. In a memorial, he accused Necker of infidelity in his account, and this memorial was handed about, and the more sought after because it was in manuscript. An economical minister never wants enemies: Necker had a crowd of them, and he had powerful ones. Maurepas, without declaring himself, rallied them around him; and this is one of the examples of the wretched interests of self-love on which the destiny of states so often depends.

Maurepas was president of the council of finance; and in the account where Necker exposed the situation of the finances, in a manner so honourable to himself, Maurepas was not named. This, in the eyes of the old minister, was an injurious omission: he dissembled, but he never pardoned it.

Another affront was the dismissal of a minister, the creature of Maurepas, or rather of his wife, and who was discarded at Necker's request. Maurepas, who had never had any excuse for suffering himself to be governed by women, was however wholly subjugated by his wife. That assiduous complaisance, which is only perpetual adulation, and which, above all for age and in adversity, has so much sweetness and empire, had charmed and captivated him as much as love would have done. He had encouraged the habit of loving, or of hating, all who were loved or hated by the companion of his misfortune; and Sartines was one of the men to whom the countess de Maurepas was most attached.

Sartines, formerly minister of police, possessed in circumspection, discretion, and suppleness, all the trifling talents of mediocrity; but, from the obscure detail of the police of Paris to the ministry of the marine, amid the dangers of a maritime war, the distance was alarming: never had Sartines acquired the least portion of that knowledge which this important place required; and, if there were a man to oppose to the English admiralty, in the heat of this war that embraced the two worlds, most certainly it was not he. The bad success of the operations corresponded to the profound incapacity of him who directed them: no plan, no accord, no whole; enormous expenses, disastrous defeats; each fleet that left our ports, a prey for the enemy. Our commerce and our colonies unprotected, our convoys captured, our squadrons destroyed, and, without including the irreparable loss of our sailors and the ruin of our dock-yards, more than four millions of extraordinary expenses thrown every year into the sea, to behold ourselves shamefully driven from it, in spite of all the courage and all the devotion of our navy; such were the titles of Sartines to the support and protection of Maurepas.

Necker, who grieved to see the deplorable use that was made of so much treasure, and into what hands the fortune and fame of a great nation were abandoned, was not the less active and strenuous in his efforts to provide for the exigencies of the war, and to sustain its weight. He had agreed with Sartines that, over and above the sums he annually received from the royal treasury, he might, in pressing cases, make use of the personal credit of the treasurer of the navy, to the amount of two hundred or two hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and he depended on his exactness in keeping himself within these bounds, when he learned from the treasurer himself that, in obedience to his minister, he had carried the sum of his advances, and of his bills negotiated on

the exchange, to one million, payable in three months. This was a most violent blow to the director of the finances; for, having taken no measures to face engagements which had been concealed from him, he saw the term approaching, without knowing how to fulfil them. He did fulfil them; but, whether there were on the part of Sartines any malevolence, or only imprudence, Necker no longer felt himself safe in transacting business with such a man; he complained of him to the king, and decidedly demanded either his own retreat or that of Sartines.

Maurepas was at Paris, confined with the gout. The king, before he determined, wrote to him to consult him. "When he received the king's letter," said the duke de Nivernois to me, while we were talking on this subject, "his wife and I were by his bedside. He read it to us. The alternative was long debated; but at last, deciding for himself, 'Sartines must be sacrificed,' said he; 'we cannot do without Necker.'"

The king, on dismissing Sartines, consulted Necker on the choice of the successor he should give him; and Necker recommended to him marshal Castries. It is well known how gloriously the events and conduct of the war justified this choice. The old minister was but the more jealous of him; and his closet from that time was like a focus of activity for the cabals that were plotting against Necker. This cabal reckoned too on the protection of the king's brothers.

However circumspect Necker was in his conduct to them, his enemies fancied they perceived that the princes thought him too severe; but what is much more true, this severity displeased the court; and in the exchanges, the cessions, the sales; in short, in all the business that men in favour had been accustomed to negociate with the king, fearing in this director of the finances a clear-sighted and rigid examiner, they all longed to be rid of him.

No snares could now be laid for the facile kindness

of the king, no favours surprised, no indulgence lightly and silently stolen; above all, no means now existed of concealing, in the corners of the portfolio of the ministers, the secret articles of a lease, a bargain, or a privilege, nor, in all the obscure recesses of the labyrinth of the finances, the clandestine benefices that so many were eager to enjoy. The man who struck at the root of so many abuses could not fail to be hated. The memorial that accused him of having imposed on the king was therefore strongly supported.

Far be it from me to impute to the royal brothers of the king the slightest suspicion of having wished to favour calumny. But falsehood had contrived to assume to their eyes the face of truth, as the vilest interests had assumed the colour of zeal.

Bourboulon, the author of the memorial, treasurer of the count d'Artois, had won the favour of that prince. Proud of his protection, he feared nothing; and, avowing himself Necker's accuser, he defied him to answer the accusation. So much assurance had an air of truth, and thereby imposed on the public. Many could scarcely believe that Necker should have so suddenly and so marvellously changed the situation of the finances; and, without imputing to him as a crime the specious account he had given of them, they conceived that his account had been composed with art in order to uphold credit, announce means of supporting the war, and facilitate the return of peace. Maurepas welcomed this opinion with an air of intelligence, and seemed to applaud the penetration of those who divined so well.

But Necker did not think it his duty to accept of such an apology; and, incapable of making any compromise with opinion on the article of his honour, he requested the king's permission to lay before him, in the presence of his ministers, Bourboulon's memorial, and to answer it article by article. The king consented; and Maurepas, Miromesnil, and Vergennes,

three of Necker's enemies, were present at this refutation. The memorial was read there, and contradicted from one end to the other by papers that confirmed the situation of the finances, and of which the account presented to the king was only a development.

At these incontestable proofs, the three ministers had not the least shadow of doubt to oppose; and when the king asked Maurepas, in confidence, what he thought of these calculations, and of this statement of the finances; "I think, sire, that it is as full of truth as of modesty," answered the old courtier.

After this examination, it was necessary that the falsehood of the accusation should be punished, or that Necker should be suspected of having defended himself weakly. He had treated with contempt the abusive libels that attacked only his own person, but ought he to be equally indifferent to those which decried his administration? The more notorious was the pure justice of the king, the more impossible would it seem that Bourboulon should be retained in the service of the princes, had he been convicted of falsehood and calumny. Yet, after this conviction, he remained in his place, and was received everywhere, even at the king's suppers.

In this conjuncture, on which I insist, on account of the fatal consequences that Necker's resolution was about to produce, he had three courses to take: one, to rely more firmly on his own reputation, and to dissemble and endure all till the death of Maurepas, which was not far distant; another, simply to defend himself by printing, on two columns, Bourboulon's memorial and the authentic vouchers that refuted the slander it contained; the other, to demand of the king, that his accuser, convicted of calumny, should be punished for it. The first is what the most prudent would have advised. "Why did he not wait?" said the duke de Nivernois to me, after the death of Maurepas: "six months of patience,

and we should have kept him still." And had peace been restored, and the finances re-established by a good economist, under the best of kings, we should long have enjoyed his reign and virtues. The second would likewise have been a reasonable course; for, the public having the vouchers before their eyes, truth would have been manifest, and the defamer confounded. But some of Necker's pretended friends thought that it would not be worthy of him to enter the lists with such an assailant. In my opinion, he should either have treated him with contempt, or engaged in fair combat. He demanded that he should be punished. It is true, that he was every day threatened with libels still more atrocious and more infamous; and, if no example were made of Bourboulon, it would be impossible that Necker, abandoned by the hatred of the old minister to the insolence and rage of an authorised cabal, should not lose at least a part of that consideration which was the soul of his credit. It was in the name of this credit, of this powerful opinion, without which he could effect nothing, he required that his calumniator, as his whole punishment for this malicious aspersion, should be removed from the service of the count d'Artois. Maurepas's answer was, that he asked what was impossible. "It belongs then to the king himself," insisted Necker, "to give testimony to truth, by some mark of the confidence with which he honours me." And what he asked was to be admitted to the privy council. I should observe that he considered it as a great evil that, in the council where those questions were agitated which most depend on the state of the finances, the director of those finances should not be admitted by full right; and he had reason to think his presence there at least useful. But Maurepas saw, or feigned to see, in so just a demand, only a misplaced vanity. "Who? you in the council!" said he, "you who do not go to mass!"—"Count," answered Necker, "that reason

suits neither you nor me. Sully did not go to mass, and Sully was of the council." Maurepas, in this answer, only caught at the ridicule of comparing himself to Sully; and, instead of admission to the council, he offered to ask his admission to the cabinet. Necker did not dissemble that he considered this offer as a derision, and begged to retire from the ministry.

It was this that his enemies stood impatiently expecting in Maurepas' drawing-room; and the marchioness de Flammarens, his niece, has confessed it to me. But he, feigning not to consent to what he most desired, refused to present Necker's resignation to the king, and concluded by telling him that he must address himself to the queen, if he were finally resolved to ask his dismission.

The queen, who listened to him favourably, and expressed her esteem for him, felt the loss which the king was about to suffer; and, seeing that Necker persisted in his resolution, she required that he should at least take twenty-four hours to reflect.

Necker, in consulting with himself, retraced the good he had done, thought of the services he could still have rendered, and anticipated the bitterness of the regret he should feel after having renounced them; and unable to persuade himself that an old man, on the brink of the grave, would be obstinately unjust to him, he determined to see him once more.

"Sir," said he, "if the king be pleased to show me that he is satisfied with my services, he may give me a mark of that satisfaction, which will only enable me to serve him better; it is the direction of the army and navy contracts."—"What you ask," said Maurepas, "would offend the two ministers."—"I do not think so," replied Necker; "but, if that be the case, so much the worse for the minister who, in the examination of expenses which it is impossible that he should appreciate himself, would envy me an employment which he abandons to his clerks." The final answer of the one was, that this demand was not

fit to be proposed; the ultimate resolution of the other was, to go and entreat the queen to obtain the king's consent to his resignation. The queen took it, and the king accepted it. Here is the source from which all our misfortunes have sprung. You will soon see how they swelled and overflowed in torrents, till we were plunged in the deep abyss of ruin.

The facility with which the king deprived himself of a skilful minister, who had served him well, may appear somewhat improbable. But these services were discoloured by adroit and perfidious insinuations. Necker was represented to him as a man of consummate pride, and of a pride that was inexorable. He was told that they had endeavoured to explain to him that, supposing there were some errors of calculation in Bourboulon's memorial, these errors were not crimes; that there was no propriety in demanding that a prince, the brother of the king, should dishonour a man to whom he was attached, by dismissing him from his service for having displeased a minister of finance; but nothing had been able to appease him. They had offered to ask, and to obtain for him from his majesty, a favour with which the highest of the nobility thought themselves honoured, admission to the cabinet; but he had disdained it. As he conceived himself necessary, he pretended to make law; he compared himself to Sully, and required nothing less than to govern in the council, to keep watch over the ministers, and, in a word, to seat himself on the throne beside the king.

The disinterestedness with which Necker had wished to serve the state contributed too to give him the reputation of a lofty republican, who wanted to confer obligation and to owe none; and in refusing, as he had done, the salary annexed to his place, Necker, in my opinion, ought to have expected that a pride, so humiliating for all those who did not and could not possess it, would be wrongly interpreted.

Finally, to leave the king no regret at Necker's

retreat, they had contrived to persuade him that, if it were an evil, the evil was inevitable.

One of Necker's projects was, as is well known, to establish provincial assemblies throughout the kingdom. And, in order to convince the king of the utility of these assemblies, Necker, in a memorial that he privately read to him, and which was intended for him only, had exposed on one side the inconveniences of the arbitrary authority confided to the intendants, and the abuses which their subalterns made of it; and on the other side, the advantage which the king would derive from approaching his people, and gaining their personal and immediate confidence, instead of depending on the intervention of the parliaments. This memorial, fraudulently obtained, and divulged at the same time that Bourboulon spread his, displeased the magistrates, and prejudiced them against Necker, as much as was requisite to furnish the old minister with some ground for declaring to the king, that Necker was ruined in the opinion of the parliaments; that he, who had once offended them, would always find them unmanageable; that this misunderstanding would be a hydra to combat perpetually; that Necker felt it himself; and that, in retiring for other pretended causes, he was sensible that the place was no longer tenable for him.

A remarkable singularity, and which alone would show the thoughtlessness of Maurepas, is, that when he returned into his drawing-room, delighted at Necker's retreat, his friends, having asked him what man he meant to put in his place, he confessed that he had not thought of it. It was cardinal de Rohan, said his niece to me one day, who, happening to be there, recommended Fleury to him; and Fleury was appointed.

This old counsellor of state, with a cunning, insinuating, and supple mind, had in his favour his connections and influence with the magistracy; this,

in the opinion of Maurepas, was a considerable advantage; for, seeing only in the finances a war of chicanery between the court and the parliament, for him, the most skilful comptroller-general would be he who could best contrive means and facilities for getting the edicts passed. He had himself made a great point of acquiring the good-will of the parliaments, and he wished that a director of the finances, guided by his example, should have with them that suppleness which obtains by gentle means what authority could scarcely command.

Fleury in this respect well answered his expectation. He, without any obstacle, procured the assent of the parliaments to two millions of taxes. Necker had left him upwards of eight millions in the royal treasury. This is more than would have been necessary to insure ease to a skilful and well accredited minister; but, with these succours, Fleury soon fell into distress; he wanted that credit which public esteem grants only to good faith.

Six months after the death of Maurepas, Fleury was dismissed; and the king, to have at least an honest man at the head of the finances, appointed d'Ormesson to succeed him.

Unfortunately, this man had only honesty. Indifferent in all beside, a stranger to finance, destitute of means, assailed by necessity, pressed by men in favour, and reduced to the alternatives either of retiring, or of supporting himself by unworthy condescensions, he did not hesitate in the choice; and, with his integrity, he preferred leaving the ministry to dishonouring himself.

A post so slippery, where all seemed to fall, might well have alarmed the ambition of those who aspired to it; yet this ambition was but the more eager; and, in all the avenues to favour, there was not an intriguer who, with some slight tint of a knowledge of business, did not think he might pretend to replace him who had just fallen.

In this crowd, a man of understanding and talents distinguished himself: it was Calonne. He had chosen a method to succeed, which was the more singular, because it was simple. Far from dissembling his ambition, he had announced it; and instead of the austerity with which some of his predecessors had armed themselves, he had adorned himself with engaging graces, with amenity, and, above all, with complaisance for women; he was known to them as the most obliging of men; and, in confiding his views to those who were in favour, there were no means of which he was not lavish, to conciliate their suffrages. Thus they incessantly extolled his talents, his skill, and his genius. He was scarcely less seducing for men, by an easy and natural politeness, that marked all distinctions without rendering any offensive, and by an air of benevolence that seemed to be favourable to the ambition of all. At each new change the voice of every courtier was raised for him. He was at last appointed, and, on arriving at Fontainbleau, where the court was, it seemed that he held in his hand the horn of plenty: he was accompanied in triumph (3d November 1783).

At first, believing himself at the source of inexhaustible riches, without calculating either the wants or the expenses that awaited them; intoxicated with his own prosperity, in which he imagined he soon saw that of the state; disdaining all foresight, neglecting all economy, as unworthy of a powerful king; persuaded that the first art of a man in place was the art of pleasing; resigning to favour the care of his fortune, and thinking only of rendering himself agreeable to those who study to be feared in order to be bought,—he suddenly saw himself encompassed by praise and vain glory. Nothing was talked of but the graces of his reception, and the charms of his language. It was to paint his character that the expression of *formes élégantes* was borrowed from the arts; and the new word *obligeance* ap-

peared to be invented for him. It was said that the ministry of the finance had never been filled with so much gracefulness, ease, and dignity. The facility with which he transacted business astonished every one, and the gaiety with which he treated it, however important it might be, made him admired as a man of prodigious talent. Even those, in short, who dared to doubt whether he were the best of ministers, were forced to acknowledge that he was the most fascinating. It was said that the business he transacted with the king was only a pastime, so much charm did his address spread over it: nothing rugged, nothing painful, no embarrassment for the present, no inquietude for the future. The king was tranquil, and everybody was contented; when, at the expiration of three years and some months of that brilliant administration, was revealed the fatal secret of the state's ruin.

It was then that Calonne displayed courage and resources. After having in vain exhausted every means of reviving expiring credit, he saw that his only hope was in some brilliant stroke, that should give to the edicts the aspect of the restoration of public confidence; and, to show them invested with an imposing authority, he demanded of the king an assembly of 'notables,' to whom he would expose the situation of the finances, in order to advise with them on the means of providing for the deficit which, he said, he had found there, and which the war in the two Indies had necessarily augmented.

This assembly was opened at Versailles on the 22d of February 1787. The statement of the project that Calonne presented there, was vast and bold, and perhaps merited more favour than it obtained; for it touched on the great means of increasing the produce of the taxes, and at the same time of rendering them lighter by dividing them. But the 'notables' were of the number of those who would be affected by the new taxes; and to this, very unhappily for themselves

and the state, they never would consent. Of Calonne's projects, some were thought confused and deceitful; others, full of difficulties that rendered them impracticable; others, in short, bad, even if they could have been executed. Such was the result of the observations of the 'notables' on that part of his plan which had undergone their examination, for it was not discussed even to the end.

Its basis was a land-tax in kind, the advantage of which would have been to follow the progressive rise in the value of property. However, if it were found too difficult to collect, he would have changed the mode, provided it had been equally charged on all real estate. But they would not make any arrangement with him; and for the principle, as well as for the form, the notables pronounced that this tax was inadmissible; and at the same time they declared that they would refuse to deliberate on every species of tax, unless they were permitted to inspect the detailed statements of the receipt and expenditure, in which they might see how the deficit had been formed; that if, after examining the accounts, they should find that new supplies were indispensable, they would consent that the tax should be equal on all property.

The king's answer was such as they had foreseen. It was forbidden them to insist on this examination; but the explanation that Calonne refused, he himself had provoked, by disputing with Necker on the origin of the deficit. The way in which he had engaged in that dangerous defile was this:

In 1787, at the opening of the assembly, the deficit, by Calonne's confession, amounted to four millions eight hundred thousand pounds; and, as he wished to believe that a considerable part of this deficit existed before his time, he did believe it, and advanced it in the assembly of the 'notables.'

Necker, informed that, in that assembly, Calonne had accused of infidelity all the accounts presented

before his ministry, wrote to him to say that, having given the most scrupulous attention to the account which he had presented in 1781, he held it to be perfectly accurate; "and as I have collected," added he, "the vouchers of every article that was susceptible of them, I fortunately find myself able to give to truth its full force. I think therefore, sir, that I have a right to ask of you either not to impair, in any way, the confidence that is due to the exactness of that account, or to clear your doubts by communicating them to me."

Calonne, by a very light promise not to attack that account, eluded the explanation. Necker insisted, and, in answer to the most pressing letter, he received a politely ironical note, with a copy of the speech that Calonne had just delivered in the assembly of the 'notables,' and in which he had advanced that in 1781 there was a considerable deficit between the revenues and the ordinary expenses. Necker was informed, at the same time, that in the great committee of the 'notables,' which was held at the king's brother's, Calonne had expressly said that this sum was two millions three hundred thousand pounds.

Necker then complained to the king that, without choosing to hear him, the comptroller-general of the finances had taken the liberty of accusing him. "Sire," said he in his letter, "I should be the man of all others most worthy of contempt, if such an accusation had the slightest foundation; I ought to repel it at the peril of my peace and happiness, and I come humbly to entreat your majesty to be pleased to permit me to appear before my public accuser, either at the assembly of the 'notables,' or at the great committee of that assembly, and in the presence of your majesty." To this letter he received no answer: but he did not think himself obliged to interpret the king's silence as the minister wished him to interpret it. "The king," said he, in the statement that he published, "has not judged it expedient to grant my

request; but, appreciating the extent of his benevolence and justice, I submit myself with confidence to the obligation that is imposed on me by honour and by truth."

In this statement, he agreed that in 1766, Clugny had left in the finances a deficit of one million; he agreed also that from the death of Clugny, in October 1776, to the month of May 1781, the epoch at which he himself retired from the finances, the increase of the charges had amounted to one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds; but at the same time he showed how he had provided for this increase, as well by economy as by improvements in the revenues of the state. The 'notables' pretended that Calonne was bound to discuss and refute these calculations; and it must be confessed that he had himself too inconsiderately engaged so to do.

Necker had rendered his calculations as clear as it was possible; his acknowledged veracity moreover added great weight to them. The book that he had just published on finance had fortified his personal reputation; his morals, talents, and knowledge, had acquired in the public opinion a firm and consistent esteem, that it was dangerous to attempt to shake without strong and powerful means.

Necker was exiled for having dared to defend himself. This was another error that Calonne committed; he ought either to have heard him before he attacked, or to have permitted him to repel the attack. He imputed to him his ill success in the assembly of the 'notables;' but he ought to have known that in that assembly a much more real enemy was contriving his fall.

The king felt great reluctance to part with Calonne: he liked his manner of transacting business; he was persuaded of the excellence of his projects; but, foreseeing that they would be rejected by the parliament, as they were by the 'notables,' he did violence to his own feelings, and dismissed him. He knew

that Miroménil, the keeper of the seal, was Calonne's enemy, and that he had opposed Calonne's operations with his whole power; he dismissed him at the same time, as a kind of sacrifice to so favourite a minister (Calonne the 8th of April, Miroménil the 9th.) Fourqueux was called to the direction of the finances; the seal was given to the president de Lamoignon.

It was not possible that Fourqueux should long keep his place; but he had been recommended to the king by those he consulted, till they should have completely destroyed his prejudice against a man whom they wished to give him as a confidential minister, and to whom they looked for the preservation of the state.

The state of the king's mind at that moment is expressed to the life in the details I am going to transcribe.

"When the king charged me with his letter for M. de Fourqueux," says the count de Montmorin, in some notes which he has confided to me, "I thought it my duty to represent to him that the weighty direction of the finances appeared to me to be too much above the abilities of that good magistrate. The king appeared to feel that my anxiety was well founded."—'But who should I take then?' said he.—I answered, 'that it was impossible for me not to be astonished at that question, while there existed a man who united in his favour the suffrages of a whole people; that, at all times it was necessary not to oppose public opinion in choosing a financial minister; but, that, in the critical circumstances in which he then was, it did not suffice not to oppose it, but that it was indispensably necessary to be guided by it.' I added, 'that so long as M. Necker should exist, it would be impossible for him to have any other minister of finance, because the public would always see, with ill-humour and chagrin, that place occupied by any other.' The

king acknowledged M. Necker's talents; but he objected to the defects in his character; and I easily recognised the impressions that M. de Maurepas had first made against him, and that MM. de Vergennes, de Calonne, de Miroménil, and de Breteuil had more deeply engraven. I was not personally acquainted with Necker; I had only doubts to oppose to what the king told me of his disposition, of his loftiness, and of his spirit of dominion. It is probable that, if I had then known him, I might have decided his recall. I ought perhaps to have insisted more strongly, even without knowing him; but I had but just entered the ministry—I had not been there six weeks; and besides, some timidity, and too little energy, prevented me from being so pressing as I might have been. What evils should I have averted from France! What vexations should I have spared the king!" [What would he have said, if he had foreseen that, for having missed that moment of changing the course of our fatal destinies, he should himself be massacred by a people who were become savage, and that three months after his death the king should perish on a scaffold?] "I was obliged," continues he, "to go and deliver to M. de Fourqueux the letter that was addressed to him, and even to conquer his resistance; for this I had positive orders. At the same time, it is certain that the place had been offered to M. de la Millière: the queen had sent for him; the king was with her at the hour she had appointed to receive him; and both strongly pressed him to accept; but he had good sense enough not to yield to their entreaties. M. de Fourqueux at first made many difficulties; but at last he determined. He was scarcely in place when the modest opinion that he entertained of himself was but too well confirmed.

"Public affairs were now in a state of absolute stagnation," adds M. de Montmorin; "credit was hastening daily to its complete fall; the factitious

and expensive means that M. de Calonne had employed to support it, suddenly failing, produced, every day, a considerable fall in the funds; the royal treasury was empty; the suspension of all payment was considered as very near at hand; no other resource than a loan was imagined, and it was impossible to try that in a moment of such desperate distress. Ill-humour pervaded the assembly of the 'notables,' the spirit that prevailed among them was bad, and they already began, in murmurs to call for *les états généraux*. In these circumstances it was necessary to have a man that could govern opinion. M. de Lamoignon and I communicated our opinions to each other, and we agreed that the only man on whom some hope might be founded was M. Necker. But I mentioned to him the obstacles that I had already found in the king's opinion, and foretold that these obstacles would become still more insurmountable by the presence of the baron de Breteuil. We consulted with the baron, endeavouring to convert him, but in vain. At last, after a long sitting, we determined to go up to the king; and, when we were all three debating on the change which the ministry of the finances required, I spoke with energy on the necessity of recalling him whom the public voice demanded. The king answered me (indeed with the air of the deepest affliction) 'Well, you have only to recall him.' But the baron de Breteuil then rose, with extreme warmth, against the half-wrested resolution; he represented the inconsistency that there would be in recalling a man who was scarcely arrived at the place fixed for his exile, in order to put him at the head of the administration; 'What weakness such a conduct would betray; what force it would give to him, who, thus placed by opinion, would have no obligation but to that, and to himself.' He spoke strongly and at length, on the abuse that Necker would not fail to make of such a position. He painted his character in colours that were best

calculated to make an impression on a king naturally jealous of his authority, and who had a confused presentiment that he had enemies who wanted to tear it from him, but who believed it still entire in his hands, and who wished to preserve it. There were very specious reasons in what the baron de Breteuil had just said; but had they been less so, they would still have produced the effect which they had on the king, who had only yielded to my advice with extreme repugnance, solely perhaps because he supposed that we were all three of the same opinion. The archbishop of Toulouse was then proposed, and accepted without resistance. At the same time the king observed, that he had the reputation of being a restless and ambitious man, and that we should perhaps repent of having recommended him to his choice. But he added, that he had reason to think that the defects of this prelate had been exaggerated to him; that the prejudices he had felt against him had long been weakened; and that he had been pleased with some memorials on the administration of the finances which he had sent him."

I have omitted none of these details, both because they will make known the mind and disposition of the king, whose character was perhaps a little too facile, but simple, natural, and good; and, above all, because they discover how the principal link in the chain of our misfortunes was formed.

BOOK XIII.

Brienne had distinguished himself in the states of Languedoc. He had there shewn he possessed the talent his place required; and in the little circle of his administration, he might have been thought

clever. Like Calonne, he had that lively, quick, and resolute character which imposes on the multitude. He had likewise something of the address of Maurepas; but he had neither the air of goodnature and affability of the one, nor the supple and conciliatory manners of the other. Naturally acute, subtle and penetrating, he neither could nor wished to conceal the intention of being so. His eye, in observing, scrutinised you; even his gaiety had something disquieting; and in his physiognomy there was an excess of cunning that engendered distrust; on the side of intellect, a sagacity that resembled craft; clear and even extensive ideas, yet superficial; some knowledge, but indefinite; unstable perceptions rather than mature views; a polished wit, with some brilliancy; and in great objects a facility at seizing the detail, but no capacity for embracing a whole; on the side of morals, ecclesiastical egotism in all its force, and the greediness of avarice combined in the highest degree with ambition. In circles that lightly touch on everything and examine nothing, Brienne had the art of employing a certain political babble, concise and rapid, interrupted by those mysterious suppressions that seem to indicate more than we say; to insinuate what we could add, if we pleased, and to give a vague indefinite character to the opinion we inspire ofourselves. This manner of displaying, by feigning to conceal himself; this self-sufficiency, mixed with discretion and reserve; this alternate use of broken words and affected silence; and sometimes a light and disdainful censure of what was doing without him, while he expressed his astonishment that none perceived what was best to be done; such was very truly the art and secret of Brienne. He shewed nothing of himself but patterns, and they were very often not of his own manufacture. Yet, in most of the circles which confer reputation, every one concluded, that he came to the ministry with an enlightened mind and his portfolio replete with the

most luminous projects. He did come, and his portfolio and his head proved to be equally empty.

In the wreck of Calonne, he seemed to have collected all that could be saved: the edicts of the stamp duty and of the land-tax, which he presented to the parliament, were the edicts of Calonne. He might have made the authority of the 'notables' his support; and, between the two great rocks of the states-general and of bankruptcy, he had powerful means of reducing that assembly to recognise the necessity of the taxes. He only dissolved it. Nothing was there decreed, nothing concluded.

The cry of the nation demanded the recall of Necker, and had Brienne himself solicited the king to grant his recall, it would have honoured him; he would thereby have confirmed himself in the eminent place he occupied; he would have relieved himself from the burthen of the finances; he would have secured his own repose, inspired blessings on his elevation, covered with a veil of dignity his indecent fortune, easily have concealed his indolence and incapacity; and, in a word, would have conducted himself like a skilful and an honest man: but for this he had not the courage.

Of this he was deprived by the fatal fear of being eclipsed, of being surpassed. In vain did his friends intreat him to call to his aid the man whom the public voice invoked; he answered: "The king and queen will not consent." It depends on you, said Montmorin, to persuade the queen that Necker is necessary to you, and I will undertake to convince the king. Brienne, thus closely pressed, answered, "I can do without him." Thus empires perish.

Tormented to hear the public so earnestly call for Necker, he took pleasure in seeing him exposed to the lash of hungry writers, whom, as it was said, he paid for their calumnies. At the same time, he perceived himself lost in the chaos of his own ideas. In less than five months, he tried two comptrollers-

general, Villedeuil and Lambert; but both in vain. A new council of finance, a committee of consultation—anything was better than Necker; but all was useless. Till the last extremity, he ineffectually flattered himself with expedients. Bewildered at sea without a compass, and not knowing which way to steer the helm of state; in his conduct and his character always at variance with himself; irresolute in temerity, pusillanimous in audacity, daring everything, yet abandoning everything almost the instant after he had dared; he never ceased to compromise and to weaken the royal authority, while he rendered himself at once odious by his despotism, and contemptible by his folly and instability.

To gain the public favour, he began by desiring to establish provincial assemblies; and, by rendering them elective, and dependant on the people, he did that lightly, and inconsiderately, which would have required the most serious reflection. Despotic as he was, he wanted to give himself an appearance of popularity, and to pass for a republican. He supported this part wretchedly.

After having dismissed the 'notables,' he sent his two edicts of the stamp-duty and the land-tax to the parliament, as if they were necessarily to pass at the first view, without the least difficulty. It was there however that young and ardent spirits began to enquire into those respectable limits, those questions of public right, so critical and so delicate, that were soon afterwards debated with such warmth and temerity. This gave him no uneasiness. He even appeared, during the sittings and debates of parliament, to have forgotten his favourite talent, address and insinuation. No negociation, no conference, no road open to reconcilement: he wanted to surmount every difficulty, and carry everything by open force. So much arrogance and obstinacy raised a spirit of revolt in the magistracy; and the resolution of rejecting the new edicts, even before they were

presented, was at once taken in all the parliaments of the kingdom. But to this insurrection, which menaced the royal authority, Brienne only opposed the disdain of conciliatory measures, and the resignation of the public cause to the fortune of events.

The parliament of Paris demanded a communication to be made of the state of the finances; which demand was reasonable. In order to regulate the amount and duration of the subsidies, according to the exigencies of the state, the parliament ought to know what those exigencies were: the right of exmonstrance implied the right of examining; and unless the minister required slavish obedience, he could not refuse to shew what were its duties. To this Brienne would not listen. He did not perceive that it was now more than ever necessary there should be a form of deliberation in the name of the people, and of acceptance for taxes; and that, if the government disputed the right of the parliament, as it then stood, to record and assent to the edicts, the nation would give itself representatives, who would be less manageable. It was this that the minister and the parliament should both have foreseen, and united to prevent.

To remove the difficulty, Brienne advised the king to hold a *lit de justice* at Versailles, where, by express command, the edict of the stamp-duty and that of the land-tax were registered; this old child was a stranger to the age in which he lived. The next day, the parliament having declared the register of the two edicts to be null and illegal, the expedient of Brienne was to exile this parliament, and to disperse its members.

The keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, a man of a firm and frank character, but cautious and discreet, vigorously combated and opposed in the council this advice of Brienne: he shewed, that magistrates thus dispersed would be inaccessible to all negociation, and he concluded by telling the king, that, though

the removal of the sovereign courts might sometimes be useful, the individual exile of the magistrates would always be a ministerial act of imprudence.

Brienne, to whom this idea of removal appeared quite new, adopted it instantly, and persuaded the king to sign letters patent which transferred the parliament from Paris to Troies. The keeper of the seals demanded some delay; he was not listened to, and Brienne, in the king's presence, said to him: "your ideas are excellent; but your resolutions are too slow." Scarcely were the parliament arrived at Troies when Brienne, in conferring with the keeper of the seals, recollected, as if by accident, that the presence of that court would be necessary to him for his loans in the month of November. "Had I thought of that sooner," exclaimed he, "I would not have sent it into exile; I must recall it instantly;" and his emissaries were immediately in action. [I am indebted to the keeper of the seals for these details.]

Lamoignon, a member of the parliament before he became keeper of the seals, had made known his views for the reform of our laws. It was notorious that he was employed on the means of simplifying legal proceedings, and of diminishing their duration and expense; this, in the eyes of his ancient corps, was a species of hostility, that awakened both its fear and its hatred. Brienne, informed of this aversion of the parliament to the keeper of the seals, conceived the project of promising his dismissal, if the parliament would be more manageable. "My credentials are gone," said he to Lamoignon, after having written.—"What credentials?" asked Lamoignon.—"The letter," answered Brienne, "in which I have promised your dismissal if they will be guided by reason; but don't be disturbed."

The letter arrives at Troies: it is communicated, and a sudden revolution in the minds of all takes place. All are persuaded that the act of exile, the

imperious attacks, the despotism they endure, from the minister, are dictated by the man who has long meditated the ruin of the magistracy: "Brienne abandoned to himself, would have been more feeble and timid; that character of vigour, which they saw him assume and quit at every instant, was not his own; he borrowed it from Lamoignon; it was he whom it was requisite to destroy; the ruin of the common enemy could not be too dearly purchased." It was on this condition that the edict of the twentieths was passed; for, as to those of the land-tax and the stamp duty, Brienne was obliged to consent that they should be withdrawn. But he depended on a considerable loan, and it was a triumph to him to have abused and brought back the parliament. I ought not to omit that, to give himself more weight and dignity in his negociation, he endeavoured to engage the king to name him prime-minister; and that the issue of this attempt, at first very ill received, finally was, that he was so declared.

The parliament repaired to Versailles: all appeared to be reconciled; and Brienne, on the same day, said to the keeper of the seals, "you see I have rightly judged; had I not promised these people your dismissal, you and I should both have run the risk of not being here long." But, in thinking he had deceived the parliament, Brienne was deceiving himself.

According to the terms of the edict which the parliament was to pass, he estimated that the two twentieths would be collected accurately on all real property, without any exception, and in the proportion of their effective revenues. The parliament pretended, on the contrary, that this edict ought to make no change in the ancient mode of collecting; that it authorised neither research nor new verification; and all the parliaments leagued together to declare that, if the government exercised a fiscal inquisition on property, they would oppose it openly. They were supported in this opinion by a considerable party; the

clergy, the nobility, all who were in favour made common cause with the high magistracy. Miserable avarice that has ruined them all! It was this that suddenly united that formidable party of the privileged orders against the ministry; and, to intimidate the government, their cry of war was, "Les états-généraux."

As, among the vices of private interest, we sometimes find the virtues of public spirit, it is possible that in the number of ardent minds, among the clergy and the nobles, there might be some who were induced by the old abuses of a disorderly authority to wish sincerely for the convocation of the states-general, as the only and the necessary remedy; but with respect to the mass of men, this appeal to the nation could only be a feigned menace, or a blindly passionate resolution. They must have well known that, to privileged orders, and favoured classes, the most formidable of all tribunals was that of the people; that, overburthened with taxes, it would not be the people who would grant them the permission of being exempt from taxation any more than themselves; and, these corps having everything to fear from the discussion of their privileges, it is highly improbable that they should have fared better by submitting them to the debates of a popular assembly, than by treating for them with a moderate and conciliating minister. Brienne, instead of convincing the parliament of the danger of this demand, thought only of eluding it, and proposed to the provinces to compound for the twentieths. Some consented; others, encouraged by the resistance of the parliaments, would not listen to any composition.

The combat began; the body of reserve of the parliaments, the prohibitory decrees, soon appeared, and threatened to prosecute, as an exactor and extortioner, whoever, in the estimation and collection of the twentieths, should conform himself to the edicts. Fire was kindling from one extremity of the kingdom

to the other, when suddenly, affecting another species of audacity, the minister procured a decree of the council, by which the king declared that the flourishing state of his finances permitted him to require no new extension in the imposition of the twentieths. At the same time he prepared an edict for a loan of two millions and a half, at ten per cent. annuity, and it was decided that the king, in person, should go to the parliament to get this edict registered.

Two days previously to the royal sitting, the keeper of the seals being come to Paris, received a visit from a man whose turbulent and daring spirit had distinguished him as a principal among the young magistracy, whose orator he had become. It was Duval d'Épréménil, a judge of the court of inquiry. He observed to Lamoignon, that a loan of two millions and a half would remedy nothing; that the minister should open one of twenty millions divided into five years; that he should employ this time and this treasure to re-establish order in the finances, and then convoke the states-general.

Brienne, on receiving the letter in which Lamoignon communicated to him this advice, received it joyfully; and, not doubting but that the message came to him from the court of inquiry, answered, "That he did not hesitate to profit by this proposal. For the next five years," said he, "I shall thus be secure from all dispute with the parliament." Without delay, he ordered an edict to be prepared for loans of twenty millions, which should succeed each other during the space of five years, at the expiration of which he promised the convocation of the states-general. At the same time, he announced an economy of two millions, as well in the reduction of the expenditure as in the increase of the revenues, which would answer the loan. But as if, in the sitting which he counselled the king to hold, he had wished to rouse instead of appeasing opposition, he directed the king and the keeper of the seals to assume the

most severe tone; he reminded parliament of its ancient maxims on the absolute power and entire independence of the crown; he opposed it by the words recorded in its decrees, "that to the king alone belonged the sovereign power in the kingdom; that he was accountable to God alone for the exercise of this supremacy; that the legislative power resided in the person of the sovereign, without dependence and without partition;" and, as to the states-general, the minister kept himself on the defensive, by saying, "that to the king alone belonged the right of convoking them; that he only ought to judge, whether that convocation were useful or necessary; that the three orders assembled would be for him only a more extended council, and that he should always be the sovereign arbiter of their representations and of their complaints." Nothing could be more pernicious under such circumstances, than the loftiness of this language. The effervescence of the general mind only became more fervid; the parliament took fire the sitting was tempestuous. The king, expecting to receive only counsel and information, had permitted the members openly to declare their sentiments; many speakers abused this liberty even to indecency; and a violent and bitter censure, mixing with opinions, made the king feel too sensibly that, instead of his edicts, it was his conduct and his reign that they pretended to have the right of examining. He restrained his feelings during seven hours, which this sitting occupied; and, though affected to the very soul, by the licence in which the orators indulged, he did not suffer a single mark of impatience to escape. Here began the trial of that patience of which he subsequently had so much need.

At the same time the majority of votes demanded the convocation of the states-general for the month of May in the following year; and d'Epréménil, addressing the king, said, "I see the wished-for word ready to escape your lips; pronounce it, sire, and

your parliament subscribes to your edicts." If the king had yielded, the edicts would indubitably have passed. But Brienne had recommended him to hearken to no condition, and to keep to the principle, that, " wherever the king was present, his will was law."

In fine, in spite of the king's silence, and the refusal which that silence expressed, it has been thought that had he permitted the votes to be collected, the majority would have been in favour of the acceptance of the edicts. But, punctually exact in observing the rules prescribed to him by his minister, he ordered the edicts to be subscribed, without collecting the suffrages of the parliament, and likewise directed a declaration to be registered, by which he prorogued all the parliaments in the kingdom. The duke d'Orleans, who from that time began to play his part, protested, in the king's presence, against this act of authority; and, as soon as the king had retired, the assembly, in which the peers still were, adhered by a decree to the protestation of the prince.

The next day the great deputation of the parliament was ordered to Versailles. The king cancelled the decree of the preceding day, forbad any new deliberation on the same subject, exiled the duke d'Orleans to Villers-Cotterets, and two judges of the high court, Frêteau and Sabatier, one to Ham castle, and the other to Mount Saint-Michael.

The league of the parliaments against the ministry then became general; and Brienne, having no hope of reducing them to submission, resolved to annihilate them. To this daring project, which he presented to the council, was joined that of a plenary and permanent court for the registering of laws.

In this council, Lamoignon combated the idea of a plenary court; but in vain. He was more successful in his opposition to the destruction of the high magistracy; a measure too violent, said he, and which Maupeou had dishonoured. He substituted in its

stead the project of weakening the influence of the parliament of Paris, and its power of resistance, by erecting within its jurisdiction considerable bailiwicks, the competency of which would extinguish the greater number of law-suits, and render unnecessary the tumultuous and noisy court of inquiry, of which the government wished to be rid. This simple and sure method of reducing the parliament by the increase of bailiwicks, could not fail to be welcome to the people; it would abridge law proceedings, would preserve the suitors from the expenses of long journies, from the slowness of appeals, and the plunder of chicanery; and, with respect to a jurisdiction so vast as that of Paris, this project carried with it the proof of its excellence. Brienne wished to include in it all the parliaments of the kingdom; and, without calculating what a mass of resistance he should have to conquer, he directed the keeper of the seals to draw up a plan, and prepare the edict. At the same time he traced the form of a plenary court, which he thought sufficiently imposing to secure respect and obedience to the laws. This grand operation was the secret of the *lit de justice* of the 8th of May 1788. But the silence observed on what was to pass there; the order given to the governors of provinces to repair to their posts; the packets sent to the commandants of cities where the parliaments resided; perhaps too some infidelity on the part of the printers, who might discover the project of attacking the magistracy; put this corps on its guard; and three days before the *lit de justice* (on the 5th of May) the parliament assembled, and protested against all that should be done there, under a promise and most solemn oath to resume its functions only in the same place, and in its complete integrity, without suffering any one of its members either to be excluded or separated from it.

As soon as the resolution the parliament had formed, and the engagement it had made were known

at Versailles, and that d'Epréménil was the mover of it, Brienne obtained from the king an order to arrest this dangerous man; and d'Epréménil, at the moment the officers of justice came to seize him at his own house, having fled for refuge into the high court, which was then sitting, was there taken and conducted as a prisoner to the islands of Sainte Marguerite.

The *lit de justice*, which was held at Versailles on the 8th of May, was held on the same day by the governors of the provinces in all the parliaments of the kingdom; and the laws that were promulgated there, almost all congenial to the wishes of the nation, met the same general resistance in all the parliaments.

A better distribution of justice in the provinces, the tribunals less distant, the appeals less frequent, the great causes reserved for the superior courts, the small causes terminated in less time and at less expense, the reform of the criminal code promised and already begun, a month's delay granted to the culprit after his sentence of death, torture abolished, and *la Selette* suppressed, an indemnification granted by the law to the innocent if prosecuted, the obligation imposed on the judges, when inflicting the punishment, to declare the exact nature of the crime; all this appeared desirable: the states-general promised to be convoked before the expiration of five years, the king's word pledged to render them periodical, all the money edicts consented to and accepted by the nation itself, and for the verification of the other laws an express tribunal, where only causes of trespass should be tried; here again was nothing that seemed calculated to excite alarm for the future. But, on one side, till the states-general should be convoked, the overthrow of the parliaments appeared to destroy the only barrier that till then had been able to oppose itself to the despotism of the ministers; on the other, this plenary court, whose name alone would have been a cause of disfavour, presented the

idea of an oligarchic tribunal, which would be the more formidable because it would be invested with all the public force and all the majesty of the laws.

This tribunal, composed of the officers of the crown and the commanders of the armies, the peers and the nobles of the kingdom, and of some magistrates chosen at the king's pleasure, appeared inevitably to be a too powerful counterpoise for the assembly of the states.

Thus, in the *lit de justice*, the nation saw only despotism disguised under specious advantages. The suspension of the course of justice throughout the kingdom excited a universal murmur: and in Paris that train-band of young lawyers (*la bazoche*) who were devoted to the parliament, inundated the juridical courts. The citizens were tranquil; they knew that the dispute between the parliament and the court arose from a refusal to subscribe to the equal imposition of the twentieths on all property; and this refusal did not dispose them to league with the privileged orders. But there is in Paris a mass of people, who, looking with an evil and envious eye on the luxury that surrounds them, suffer impatiently at having only labour and poverty for their lot, and who, in the vague hope of some happy change for themselves, are eager to assemble at the first signal of disorder, and to rally round the first factious leader who promises them a milder fate. It was by this multitude, in the presence of the parliament, that the party of its defenders was fortified around the palace where it sat. The magistracy put itself under the protection of the populace; and, under the eye of the general police, every excess of the grossest licence was committed with impunity: a pernicious example, which has been but too much imitated! It is thus that insurrection and revolt were first provoked by the parliament. The king's benevolence would never suffer him to adopt rigorous measures. He ordered guards to be posted in

the avenues of the palace; but he commanded them only to employ their arms in securing the lives and safety of the citizens. It was thus that the tumult was appeased and suppressed without violence. At the same time, either from the inactivity of a timid and feeble police, or from the impulse of those who, in exciting disturbance, answered for impunity, the seditious commotions among the people of Paris perpetually increased.

In the provinces, the despotism of the parliaments, each in its jurisdiction, the security which their members enjoyed in the vexations they exercised on their neighbours, their arrogance and their pride, were not calculated to render their cause interesting; but by their relations and their connivance with the privileged class, they formed together a numerous and powerful party. Even the people had suffered themselves to be persuaded that the cause of the parliaments was their own. In Britanny they believed that a tax on the *Sallains* was in agitation: they were told beside that they were threatened with new vexations; and the magistrates themselves stooped to spread these falsehoods.

In the midst of this emotion, Brienne learned that the nobles of Britanny were sending twelve deputies to denounce to the king the iniquity of his *lit de justice*. The minister of the king's household, the baron de Breteuil, immediately received orders to march the patroles to Senlis, there to wait the arrival of these men, and send them back. The order was ill executed; the deputies passed; but they had not been long arrived before they were committed to the Bastille. Instantly the nobles of Britanny, instead of twelve deputies, sent fifty-four. These were admitted to an audience of the king, and the twelve others released. The baron de Breteuil, accused by Brienne of seconding him ill, did not dissemble the repugnance he felt to do what he did not approve, and he demanded his dismissal.

At the same time the province of Dauphiny raised the standard of liberty, by giving to itself that constitution which, vaunted as a model, has since had so much influence. In the new form that Dauphiny gave to its states, the third (or that of the people) had half the votes. Brienne, with his natural levity, authorized this disposition, never foreseeing anything beyond the moment. At last, reduced by his own weakness, and by the general insurrection of the parliaments, to capitulate with them, he consented to what he had refused with the greatest obstinacy; and, by a decree of the council of the 8th of August, he pledged the king's promise for the convocation of the states-general in the month of May following; a tardy resolution, that did but announce the end of an expiring minister.

The finances were ruined, the royal treasury was empty. There was no new tax, no new loan, no hope of credit, but on all sides the most urgent wants: the annuities on the city, the pay even of the troops, all was failing at once. Nothing less would have sufficed to force Brienne to acknowledge his own incapacity, or at least his actual inability to extricate the state from this abyss of misery. He chose to complete his dishonour, and, by an order of council of the 16th of August, declared that the two-fifths of the payments from the royal treasury should be made in government notes. Public maledictions poured on him like a deluge. At last, he resolved to demand the recall of Necker. But Necker refused to join him in the ministry. He answered; "That, if he had still some hope of being useful to the state, that hope was founded on the confidence with which the nation honoured him, and that to preserve some credit himself, it was evident under what conditions only he could return."— "This answer is my sentence," said Brienne to the keeper of the seals; "I must resign;" and he gave in his resignation (the 23d of August 1788).

He left in the royal treasury only sixteen thousand guineas either in money or in other effects; and the day before his departure he sent there for eight hundred guineas, his month's salary as minister, which month was not expired; an exactness that was the more remarkable, because, without reckoning the salary of his place, and a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds annexed to his blue ribbon, he possessed in benefices twenty-eight thousand a year; and, besides, he had very recently cut down timber on one of his abbeys, to the value of forty thousand guineas.

The consideration which Necker had enjoyed, had increased during his exile; but the encouragement inspired by the public esteem was counterbalanced by the inquietude which the situation of the kingdom could not but create.

Around the capital, sixty square leagues of country, and of most fertile country, absolutely laid waste by the hail on the eve of the harvest; a bad crop in all the rest of the kingdom; the price of corn exaggerated still more by the fear of famine, and an urgent necessity to import some from abroad; neither money nor credit: all government paper decried in the market, and almost without value; every way to loans and taxes interdicted; on one side, the receipt necessarily impoverished; on the other, the expenditure unavoidably increased; and, instead of the contributions to which the inhabitants of the country would have been subjected, succours to be sent to all the places which the hail had just ruined; the courts of justice inactive; licence everywhere unpunished, and the police intimidated; discipline even tottering among the troops, and attacked in that principle of obedience and fidelity which is its nerve and spring; all ancient public right discussed and questioned; in short, all classes and orders of the state, without agreeing with each other or each with itself on what the states-general ought to be, uniting to demand them with the greatest ardour,

and till then refusing to listen to any supply;—such was the frightful crisis in which Necker found the kingdom.

His first care was to re-establish order; the parliaments were restored to their functions; justice resumed its course, and the laws of police their force and action. The treasury, empty on Necker's arrival, appeared suddenly to fill; it resumed its payments; and, if the despairing decree of the 16th of August was not at first formally revoked, at least it was virtually annulled: all payments were made in specie; and a few weeks afterwards a new decree of the council completely effaced the shame of Brienne's bankruptcy.

In suffering that discarded minister to fall silently into contempt, the public hatred had fixed itself on Lamoignon, who was considered as his accomplice: him it became necessary to sacrifice. However, as I owe more to truth than to opinion, I will be bold to say that the king lost in Lamoignon a good minister, and the state a good citizen. Deceived by the reputation that Brienne had usurped, Lamoignon had at first seen no better plan to adop than to unite with him, under the reciprocal promise of acting in concert. It was not long before he recognised his levity and incapacity. But, though seeing him perpetually involve himself in dangerous defiles, he often admonished, sometimes saved, and never abandoned him. The error, or the misfortune, of Lamoignon, was to have joined such an associate. He was ardently desirous of good, he loved the king tenderly; he has himself told me that he neither knew a better nor a more honest man: and, full of that old spirit of integrity that marked his ancestors, he appeared to have adopted loyalty and courage as his characteristic virtues. The hatred of the parliaments was itself his eulogium. The esteem, and, privately, the confidence of the king, had followed him to his retreat at Baville. But either the

vexation of exile, or some domestic misfortune, induced him to abandon life (the 8th of May 1789) and saved him from sights at which he would have died of grief.

Necker had assumed an ascendancy in the council that may easily be conceived, by considering the circumstances which produced his return to the ministry. A winter as severe as that of 1709, and of longer duration, made the resources of this minister appear still more astonishing. No new tax, no new loan known; and, by means of a little slowness which excited no complaint, the annuities, the pensions, every just demand were regularly discharged. Corn flowed into our ports from all the countries of the world, to save us from famine; succour was granted to the unfortunate peasantry; relief to the sick, to the aged, and to the orphan, in hospitals; immense expenses were incurred to secure and accelerate the arrival of provisions; such were the services that Necker rendered the state; and it is probable that, if he had been kept in the ministry, without dismissal, and had been suffered to profit by the benefits of peace, the prosperous situation of the kingdom would have offered so pleasing a picture that no one would have thought of the states-general, at least no one would have mentioned them.

But the king's word being pledged to assemble them in the month of May, it was difficult for Necker to make him break that engagement, without alienating the public mind. Besides, he has himself not dissembled that, at the bottom of his heart, he wished for the convocation of the states. "I thought," said he, in speaking of his conduct at this epoch, "that by maintaining the tranquillity of the kingdom, by propping the tottering edifice of the finances, by relieving the scarcity with abundant provision, and by thus smoothing every way to the greatest and most desired of events, I should have executed my task well, and should have done my

duty as a public man, as a good citizen, and as the faithful servant of a king who wished well to the state." As to the motives that animated him, he has explained them to us likewise. "No man," said he, "knew better than I how unstable and transient was that good which could be done under a government, where the principles of administration were changed at the whim of the ministers, and the ministers at the whim of intrigue. I had observed, that, in the transient course of the administration of public men, no general idea had time to establish itself, nor any essential good to acquire permanency and firmness." He recollected that cabinet of Maurepas, to which he himself went up with fear and melancholy, whenever it was requisite to talk of reform and economy to a minister grown old in the vain parade and customs of the court. It was the lively impression he received from the difficulties, the crosses, the obstacles that he himself had encountered, and the combats he had been compelled either to engage in or maintain, that induced him to regard the states-general as a port of safety for the shattered vessel of the state.

But, if this convocation had its advantages, it had likewise its dangers; and above all, the form that should be given to it might be of weighty importance and extreme delicacy.

Necker, at first, did not appear inclined to take on himself the risk of this first operation. He requested the king to call to his aid that assembly of notables, whose zeal he had tried, in order to consult with them.

The examples of past times, for the composition of the states-general, were uncertain and various. But the majority of these examples were favourable to the privileged orders; and if that of 1614 were followed, as the parliament demanded and expected, the order of the nobility and that of the clergy would be secure of preponderating. Their rights

and privileges would be confirmed and gauranteed to them for the future; and, in return for the service which the parliament would have rendered them, it would itself be constituted their perpetual representative, in the interval of the assemblies. But, in the popular class, the public mind had assumed a character that no longer harmonised with the pretensions of the parliamentary and feodal classes. The labourer in the village, the mechanic in the town, the honest citizen occupied by trade and industry, desired only to be relieved; if left to themselves, being peaceful, they would have deputed none but peaceful men. But, in cities, and above all in Paris, there is a class of men, who, although distinguished by education, are connected with the people by birth, make common cause with them, and, when their own rights are in question, espouse the people's interests, lend them their talents, and imbue them with their own passions. It was in this class that a contentious and daring spirit of innovation had long been forming, and which every day acquired more force and greater influence.

The very recent example of North America, restored to freedom by its own courage, and by the succour of our arms, was perpetually placed before us. The neighbourhood of the English, the now more frequent practice of visiting their country, the study of their language, the reputation of their authors, the assiduous reading of their newspapers, the eager curiosity to know what was said and done in their parliament, the lively praises that were bestowed on their orators, the interest that was taken in their debates, in short, even the affectation of imitating and adopting their taste, their fashions, their manners, all announced a ripening disposition to resemble them; and, in truth, that spectacle of public liberty and personal security, that noble and worthy use of the right and property in the voluntary acceptance and equitable assessment of the

taxes necessary to answer the exigencies of the state, might justly excite a spirit of emulation. It was under the influence of such examples that some well educated, turbulent, and daring men, everywhere admonished the people not to forget their own rights, and the minister to guard them.

The minister desired only to maintain the rights of the people; for the league of the parliaments, of the clergy, and of the nobility, against the royal authority, had forced him to look on the people as the king's refuge. But he felt himself too feeble to oppose so great a mass of resistance and influence, and wanted some powerful support.

He was not very sure of this support from the assembly of the 'notables.' In that assembly, the church and the military and civil officers would govern; the 'notables' of the cities would not even have one-third of the votes; therefore, it could scarcely be favourable to the commons.

But, whatever might be the result of the deliberations, the impulse would be given to the public mind throughout the kingdom, and the great interests of the state, agitated in that assembly, would be submitted to a still more lively discussion without. It was from this discussion, especially, that the minister expected power; and perhaps that parade of consultation was only intended to awaken the national opinion by collision, or as a signal to it to declare itself. The king had invited it to this declaration, by a decree of the council, before the dismissal of Brienne. It was therefore probable that public opinion would determine the 'notables' to join in the same invitation. They had already shewn themselves popular, in their first assembly of 1787, by not only consenting, but demanding, that, in the provincial assemblies, which Calonne proposed, the number of members of the third estate should equal that of the members of the clergy and nobility united. The question then seemed decided by themselves;

and Necker only left them the honour of confirming their decison. The same disposition in the states of Dauphiny had been loudly praised, and proclaimed as a model. Thus, on every side, the 'notables' were admonished to be popular; and it was not probable that they would wish, or would dare to be otherwise, after the disposition they had manifested. It was in this confidence that the assembly of 1787 was convoked anew, on the 5th of October 1788, and met at Versailles on the 3d of November in the same year.

But, when they came to deliberate on the manner of composing the three estates into that national council, that supreme tribunal, before which their rights, their privileges, and all the great interests of their rank and fortune would be discussed, each of the orders seemed only occupied with the dangers it was about to run.

The objects on which they had to deliberate were proposed in questions, the principal of which were:— What ought to be the respective number of the deputies of each order? What had been, and what should be their form of deliberation? What conditions would be requisite in order to be electors; and to be eligible in the order of the clergy, and in that of the commons, whether in villages or in cities? Ought these two qualities to depend on a certain measure of real property, or only on a certain quota of contribution? And what should this quota be?

The assembly was divided into six boards, each presided at by a prince; and the king required that, on each of the questions proposed, the boards having formed separately its definitive vote, these votes, with their motives sufficiently developed, should all be presented to him, with the account of the suffrages that each opinion should have had.

At the board at which Monsieur presided, opinions were divided on the number of deputies that each order should have; and, by a majority of thirteen against twelve, it was decided that each deputation

should be composed of four deputies, one of the church, one of the nobility, and two of the third estate.

The five other boards, some unanimously, the others by a great majority of votes, demanded that the number of representatives should be equal for each of the three orders, and that the king should be intreated not to suffer any violation of this equality of suffrages, which they considered as the safeguard of the state, and as the firm support of the constitution, as well as of civil and political liberty. They all acknowledged that no resolution could be legally formed, without the concurrence of the three orders; that two would have no right to engage the third, and that the *veto* of one only would thus suffice to guarantee its liberty. But this principle itself established the right of respective equality. "Such is in France," said they, "the balance of the public forces; it does not give to the third estate an unjust ascendancy over the two other orders; but it assigns the measure of its power: it does not authorise it to give the law, neither does it suffer law to be imposed. Now the double deputation, if it should be granted to the commons, would destroy this relationship of equality and independence; it would lead to the form of individual suffrage; it would inspire that idea; it would excite attempts to establish it; and who could calculate its pernicious consequences? The first deliberation of the states would be directed to that object, and its effect would be to produce in that assembly the most dangerous fermentation."

Thus the second question, that is, What should be the form of deliberating? could admit of no doubt; and with the exception of the board of Monsieur, which left the choice of it to the states, all demanded that the votes of each order should be separate.

The reasons of the minority for demanding a double representation in favour of the commons, were, that, in supposing the votes to be taken by order, it was just and natural that in an assembly

where the laws, the arts, industry, commerce, agriculture, and finance, would perpetually be submitted to discussion, the class, informed by profession on all these objects, should at least be of equal force with the class that made no study of them; for it must often happen, that the object of the deliberation would be of such a nature as to require individual suffrage; that then, above all, the right which the commons would have to the power of opposing two votes to two other combined votes, was as indisputable as the right they had not to suffer themselves to be eternally governed.

No one, it was added, could dispute the right of the states-general to regulate their own interior police, and to determine the manner in which the suffrages should be given and counted. On taxation, for example, it would be impossible, without manifest injustice, to decide by the absolute majority of individual votes, if of three votes the commons had but one; for the interests of the nobles and the clergy being inseparable on that article, their opinions would be so likewise; and there would then be only two parties, one of which would be double to the other.

With respect to elections, all the boards, seduced by this principle, that confidence should alone determine the choice, rendered the conditions of the right of electing and of being elected as trivial as possible: no regard to property; and, by means of a moderate contribution, every inhabitant would have, in his bailiwick, the right of being an elector, and would be eligible. In the same manner every clergyman, having in preferment or in private property the income of a village rector, might be an elector, and could be elected.

These questions were also agitated out of doors: the public had laid hold of them, and in conversation, as well as in books and pamphlets, the cause of the people was pleaded with warmth and vehemence.

At the very opening of the assembly of the 'notables,' in the committee over which Monsieur presided, the prince de Conti denouncing those publications, with which France was inundated, said:—"Be pleased, Monsieur, to represent to the king how important it is for the stability of his throne, for the laws, and for good order, that all new systems should be proscribed for ever, and that the constitution and its ancient forms should be maintained without innovation." Had Necker been struck with this foresight, as he ought to have been, he would not have directed the king to answer, that this object was not one of those for which he had assembled the 'notables.'

All the cities in the kingdom were occupied with the object of the deputations; and not only the right of nine-tenths of the nation, in competition with the two-twentieths, was everywhere insisted on, in favour of the third estate, but the right, still more incontestable, which this industrious class derived in the state from the importance of its labours. Brave and docile in war, indefatigable in agriculture, active in commerce,—security, wealth, plenty, force, knowledge, enjoyment of every kind, all flowed from it; and with this class, the source and guardian of all good, a few men, for the most part idle, and richly endowed, were disputing its right of being admitted, in equal number with their deputies, into the national council; and, to hold it in subjection, they would arrogate to themselves an eternal ascendancy. It was thus that the popular societies roused themselves to defend their rights; and this nascent liberty, which it would have been no less necessary than difficult to repress, seduced every mind.

The moment at length arrived when it was requisite that the king should form some decision, either from the votes of the assembly of the notables, or from the petitions addressed to him by all the cities and provinces of the kingdom. This was the object of the council of state of the 27th of Decem-

ber 1788. Necker there made his report of the votes of all the boards, on the most important points, particularly on the number of deputies for each of the three orders; and, after having weighed all the authorities, the examples, the reflections, the motives for and against, giving his own opinion, he said, "I think that the king can and ought to call, to the states-general, a number of deputies from the third estate, equal to the number of deputies from the two other orders united: not, as might be feared, to coerce the assembly to deliberate by individual suffrage, but to satisfy the general and reasonable wish of the commons of his kingdom." Necker's advice was that of the council, and the king resolved that to this the letters of convocation should conform. Thus, on the essential article, Necker appeared to have consulted the notables only to support himself by their decision, if it were favourable to the people, or to reject it if it were not so, and to give time to the provinces openly to declare their sentiments.

Necker does not dissemble that he wished to see permanently established a just relation between the revenues and the expenses of the state, a prudent use of credit, an equal distribution of taxes, a general plan of beneficence, and an enlightened system of legislation; above all, a continued guarantee for civil and political liberty; and he only hoped for all these advantages from the states-general, in case the commons could there command the respect due to their just demands. The *veto* of one of the three orders, if they voted by chambers, appeared to him an invincible and perpetual obstacle to the best resolutions. He wished therefore that they might have recourse to individual suffrage; which could only be equitable in case the commons should be an equal number with the clergy and the nobility. It was from these two orders, leagued with the parliaments, that the opposition to the collection of the twentieths had arisen; and it was to break this league that the government

had recourse to the commons. Then, too, the language of the commons was the expression of sentiments most favourable both to the royal authority and to the person of the king. It was by this language that the minister was deceived.

You have just seen that the notables, by reducing to a moderate contribution the title to the right of electing, and of being eligible, had rendered it independent of all real property, at the risk of admitting a great number of men indifferently, to influence the state. Necker, under the illusion which he had the misfortune to indulge on the attention the people would pay to a worthy choice of their deputies, and on the character of prudence and probity that a holy respect for their functions would impress on the representatives of the people, thought it his duty, like the notables, to clog as little as possible the freedom of the elections; and to fix, as low as he could, that quota of contribution which should confer the right of being eligible. This was one of his errors. In granting to the third estate equality of numbers, he ought indeed to have foreseen that a part of the clergy would range itself on the side of the people; and yet he gave to this popular clergy all the means of uniting in considerable force in the first elections: every rector was admissible, while he granted to the collegiates only one representative for each chapter. The rectors then would, necessarily, be elected in great numbers, and would augment in the states the party to which they were connected by ties of blood, as well as by habit, and yet more by that old hatred for the high clergy which they had so long entertained.

However, as this advantage was too evident, if the sense of the assembly were taken by an individual suffrage, the minister granted to the first orders the liberty of not voting in that way, but by their own free consent; a source of dissension in which the weakest would necessarily fall.

Here is the critical moment at which the conduct

of this minister ceases to be irreproachable. Never was man more opposed than he to that perfidious infidelity of which the iniquity of the times has accused him. But as to the security of his confidence, in a people whose character the 'League' and the 'Fronde' should have taught him to understand, it is too true that nothing can excuse him.

To fulfil the duties of a public man, those of a citizen, and those of the servant of a young and virtuous king, it was most surely requisite, as he himself has said, "to enlighten his justice, direct his inclinations, and secure to him the enjoyment of the greatest blessing of the throne, the happiness of his people, and their touching benedictions." But it was requisite, too, to enlighten his prudence as well as his justice; to warn him, as he went, of the risks he was about to run; not to cover with flowers the brink of the precipice, but carefully to avert the danger, and observe whether, instead of benedictions, he would not be exposed to outrage and cruel insult. The king resigned himself to the prudence of his minister; this, to the latter, was a sacred obligation to be wary, timid, and distrustful. Necker was not enough so. There were great evils to fear; he could only foresee good.

With a mind naturally romantic, solitary, abstract, and reserved, he was communicative to few men, and few men were tempted to be communicative to him; he knew them only by views that were too isolated, or too vague; and thence his illusions on the character of the people, to whose mercy he committed the state and the king.

The continual struggle that he had constantly been compelled to sustain against all the factions of private interest, had given him a very unfavourable idea of the court and the nobles; and he judged of them sanely. But the opinion he had formed to himself of the mass of the nation was absurdly fantastic and infinitely too flattering. He had heard

himself praised, blessed, and exalted by the people; he had enjoyed their confidence, love, and regret; it was the people who had been his avengers when basely attacked by calumny; it was their voice that had called him from exile to the ministry, and which still sustained him there. Bound by gratitude, he was not less so by the benefits he bestowed; and personally obliged to think this people feeling and just, he persuaded himself that so they would always remain. Thus his own example induced him to forget others, which should have warned him of the inconstancy of those whose cause he was pleading; of their levity, of their facility in passing from one excess to the other, and suffering themselves to be corrupted, bewildered, and irritated even to frenzy, and to the most brutal fury.

In a class above the people, but belonging to the people, he shut his eyes on the many obscure and timid passions that only awaited some focus which should collect them, in order to disclose, take fire, and burst forth together. Vanity, pride, envy, the ambition of governing, or at least of humbling those whose elevation was looked at with a jealous eye; interests more vile, and vices still more base, the speculations of cupidity, the calculations of venal souls—all of them eternal germs of faction and discord—were elements that Necker seemed not to have discovered. The abstract and seducing idea of a gentle, lovely, generous nation, preoccupied all his mind.

In this species of intoxication, he did not imagine that he was granting too much favour to the popular party. After having secured to it a constant majority, he wanted to add the advantage of situation to that of number. The security, the freedom, the tranquillity that should attend the deliberations, essentially demanded a place inaccessible to the insults of the people; a place easy to guard from every species of tumult; and he, again forgetting

prudence, thought only of placing the states-general in Paris, amidst a numerous people, easy to agitate, prompt to rebel, and most formidable in their rebellion: it was only deference to the opinion of the council that induced him to content himself with fixing them at Versailles,—*statio mala fide carinis.*

The hall which was destined for the general assemblies, and in which the greatest interests of the state would be discussed by the three orders, was surrounded by galleries, as if to invite the people to come and listen to the debate, to support their own party, to insult, to threaten, to intimidate their opponents, and to change the tribune into a stage, where they might encourage and warm their actors by applause. I mark these details, because they have been of the weightiest importance. But M. Necker would only figure to himself the assembly of the states as a peaceful, imposing, solemn, august spectacle, which the people would delight to contemplate. His hopes were never unmixed with inquietude; but, as he attributed great power to moral feeling, he flattered himself that the surest way of preventing the troubles that might arise from the discord of the three orders, was to animate them all with that enthusiasm for the public good, which renders facile and gentle the greatest sacrifice of the interests of a collective body, and of the interests of the individual. He made his first trial of it in the publication of his report to the council of state of the 27th of December 1788; and it was by the example of the king himself that he hoped to inspire, from that moment, this generous emulation.

In calling to mind the confession which the king had made to him, "that, for some years past, he had only had moments of happiness:" "Sire," said he, "this happiness you will now recover, and enjoy. You command a nation that knows how to love. If political novelties, for which it is not calculated, have diverted it for a moment from its natural

character, soon fixed by your beneficence, and strengthened in its confidence by the purity of your intentions, it will think only of enjoying that happy and constant order which it will owe to you. This grateful nation does not yet know all that you intend to do for its happiness. You have told it, sire, to your ministers, who are honoured with your confidence: you not only desire to ratify the promise you have made to impose no new tax without the consent of the states, but it is your will that none be prolonged, without that condition. You are determined to secure the periodical return of the states-general, by consulting them on the interval of their convocations, and on the means of giving to these dispositions a lasting stability. To form a solid bond between the private administration of each province and the general legislation, you desire that the deputies from every part of the kingdom should concert together on the most eligible plan, and your majesty is disposed to give it your assent. It is likewise your majesty's wish to prevent, in the most efficacious manner, the disorder which the misconduct, or the incapacity of your ministers might introduce into the finances; and, in the number of expenses that you desire to limit, you do not even except those which belong more particularly to your own person. Your majesty purposes to anticipate the legitimate wish of your subjects, by inviting the states-general to examine the great question that has arisen on *lettres-de-cachet*. You only wish, sire, for the maintenance of order, and you are willing to abandon to the law all it can execute. It is on the same principle that your majesty is impatient for the counsel of the states-general, on the measure of freedom that should be granted to the press, and to the publication of works relative to administration. In short, sire, you prefer, with reason, the lasting decisions of the states-general of your kingdom to the transient counsels of your ministers; and, when you shall have proved the

wisdom and prudence of that august body, you will not fear to give it a stability that may inspire confidence, and protect it against all changes in the sentiments of the kings your successors."

This speech of the minister, printed, published, and spread throughout the kingdom, as the solemn pledge of the king's intentions, gave him a legitimate title to the confidence of the people; and if, in pursuance of these dispositions, the states had been pleased to constitute themselves the supreme council of a king who was only desirous of what was just, and who desired all that was just; of a king, who, in concert with the nation, was resolved to fix on stable bases the very bounds of his own power, and the column of liberty and public happiness; the French monarchy, without changing its nature, would have become the mildest, the most moderate, and most solid government that ever existed. The king, in this legislative council of the nation, was going to preside like a father, to consult with his children, to regulate, to conciliate their rights, rather as a friend than an arbiter, and by their aid to reduce into laws the means of rendering them happy. It was in this spirit that the minister thought he was disposing everything to give to the nation, and at the same time was preserving to the crown, that character of grandeur, power, and majesty which this intimate union should insure, and which separately they could never fully enjoy. It is thus that the king expressed it.

But, in a petulant and inconstant people, who are suddenly eager to be free before they have learned to be so, it is but too natural that the first enthusiastic transport should carry them beyond the bounds of that freedom; and, when these bounds are once overleaped, the rest is the domain of passion, crime, and error.

BOOK XIV

Although Paris was the nurse and parent of that fermentation which was excited throughout the kingdom, the primary assemblies were there marked by no disturbance, and appeared to be wholly occupied with the choice of good electors, in order to have good representatives.

I was of the number of electors named by the section of *les Feuillans:* I was also one of the commissioners charged with the statements of the demands for the removal of certain grievances; and I can say, that in these demands there was nothing but what was useful and just. Thus the spirit of this section was reasonable and temperate.

It was not the same with the electoral assembly: the majority was at first pure and healthy; but we were assailed by a cloud of intriguers, who came to infuse the contagious air they had breathed in the conferences of Duport, one of the factious members of the parliament.

Whether Duport was sincere in his dangerous fanaticism, or whether, having calculated better than his company the risks it was about to run, he wished to secure to himself a political existence, it was well known that, from the preceding winter, at his own house, he had opened as it were a school of republicanism, to which his friends were careful to invite the most ardent minds, or those most disposed to enthusiasm.

I observed this class of turbulent and noisy men, who were ever eager to debate, impatient to distinguish themselves, and aspiring to the honour of being inscribed on the list of orators. It was not long before I saw what would be their influence; and, in leading on my fancy from one particular example to a general induction, I recognised that such, in every

town, would be the organs of faction; lawyers versed in chicanery, and all accustomed to speak in public.

It is an acknowledged truth, that no people governs itself; that the opinion, the will, of an assembled multitude is always, or almost always, only an impulse which it receives from a few men, and sometimes from one single man, who influences its sentiments, and by whom it moves and is conducted. The people have their passions; but these passions slumber tranquilly till some voice agitates and awakens them. They have been compared to the sails of a vessel, which hang loosely or languidly floating, till swelled by some fresh breeze.

It is well known that the eloquence of the tribune has at all times been exerted to move the passions of the people; and among us the only school for this popular eloquence was the bar. Even those who, in pleading, had only acquired its assurance, its action, and its declamation, had a very great advantage over the unpractised individual. A cool reasoner, a solid and reflecting mind, that wanted abundant and facile elocution, could never find support against the vehemence of a disciplined declaimer.

The surest way of propagating the revolutionary doctrine throughout the kingdom, had therefore been to engage the corps of lawyers in its favour; and nothing had been more easy. Republican by character, proud and jealous of its freedom, prone to sway, by the habit of holding in its hands the fortune of its clients, scattered throughout the realm, enjoying public confidence and public esteem, constantly communicating with all ranks of society, exercised in the art of moving the passions and subjugating the will, this class of lawyers could not but have an irresistible ascendancy over the multitude; and some by the force of genuine eloquence, others by that flow and noise of words that make weak heads giddy, and impose on them by idle sounds, could not fail to excel in the popular assemblies, and

there to govern opinion; especially by announcing themselves as the avengers of the people's wrongs, and the defenders of their rights.

You may conceive what interest this body itself had to see reform change into revolution, and monarchy into a republic: such a change offered to it the prospect of a perpetual aristocracy, which it would be requisite to organize. Successively destined to be the leaders of the republican faction, nothing could be more welcome to ambitious men; who, in consideration of their knowledge and talents, would, in their turn, be everywhere called to public functions, and would alone, or almost alone, be the legislators of France; first its chief magistrates, and soon its real sovereigns.

This prospect was the same, not only for those who practised the profession of the law, but all classes of well-educated citizens, among whom each presumed that he had talent enough to indulge the same hope, and the same ambition.

I do not deny that this ambition had an honest and a laudable pretext. In human institutions, it is impossible that all should be perfect; it is infinitely rare that all is as good, or as little defective, as possible. A government is always a machine, more or less subject to frequent changes. It is necessary then, at least at intervals, either to regulate the movements, or give new vigour to the spring; and whatever be the monarchical or republican state, the form of which you examine, there is no one so thoroughly in condition as not to appear alarming; because you there see accumulated all the vices, crimes, and abuses of the times that are passed. It was thus that the reign of Louis XVI was calumniated. Whatever were the faults and errors which he himself had not been able to avoid, he only desired to leave no trace of them, and no one wished more earnestly than he for that salutary reform; but revolution was unhappily disguised under the vague

and deceitful name of reformation; and this disguise explains the almost universal success of a plan that, offering to view, under different aspects, virtue, utility, and justice, accommodated itself to all characters, and conciliated every votary.

The most virtuous citizens thought they harmonized in will and intention with the most wicked; and, whether animated by the love of public good, by a desire of glory, the love of power, base envy, or an infamous ardour for rapine and plunder, all followed the same impulse; and from these diverse motions the result was the same,—the subversion of the state. This reflection seems to me to offer some apology for a great number of men, who have been thought depraved, and who were only misled.

That some few men, with the propensities of tigers, might have premeditated the revolution as it has been executed, is perhaps not inconceivable; but that the French nation, that the populace itself, before it was corrupted, would have consented to this barbarous, impious, and sacrilegious plot, is what no one, I believe, will dare to maintain. It is false, therefore, that the crimes of the revolution have been the crimes of the nation; and I am far from supposing that any one of my colleagues in the electoral assembly could even have foreseen them.

It was, I believe, with a blind enthusiasm for the public good, that this troop of lawyers joined us; they were supported by a train of ambitious republicans, who, like them, aspired to render themselves celebrated in the councils of a free people. Target, distinguished at the bar, and in good repute among us, came there to perform a principal part.

The government had sent us the minister of police as our president. This was a false step, an act that was indefensible. An assembly essentially free had a right to a president taken from its own body, and of its own choice. This magistrate sustained his mission honourably: his firmness and prudence com-

manded our admiration, but in vain. The cause was definitively pleaded with him by Target, the lawyer; and the latter, for having defended the rights of the assembly, was proclaimed its president.

A champion, long exercised in the combats of the bar, armed with assurance and audacity, tormented by ambition, and encompassed by a circle of noisy applauders, he began by insinuating himself into the favour of all, as a conciliating and pacific man. But when he had gotten full possession of this assembly of citizens, all yet new in the functions of public men, he laid aside the mask he had worn, and assumed his real character. Instead of confining himself, as the duties of his place directed, to a faithful exposition of the state of the question submitted to the examination of the assembly, instead of collecting votes, summing up evidence, and declaring its opinion, he dictated.

Our functions were not confined to the election of deputies, we had likewise to form their instructions for complaints, petitions, and demands; and every grievance gave rise to fresh declamation. The indefinite words of equality, liberty, and the sovereignty of the people, resounded in our ears; each heard them, and each interpreted them as his fancy directed. In the regulations of police, in the money edicts, in the gradations of authority, on which order and public tranquillity rest, there was nothing in which some mark of tyranny was not evident; and a ridiculous importance was attributed to the minutest details. Of this I will cite but one example.

The subject was the wall and gates of Paris, which were denounced as calculated only to confine beasts, and as most offensive to men.

"I have seen," said one of the orators, "yes, citizens, I have seen at the gate St Victor, on one of the pillars, in sculpture, will you believe it? I have seen the enormous head of a lion, open jawed, and vomiting chains, with which he threatens the passen-

gers. Is it possible to imagine a more fearful emblem of despotism and slavery?" The orator himself imitated the lion's roar. The whole audience was moved; and I, who so often pass by the gate St Victor, was astonished that this horrible image should never have struck me. On that day therefore I paid particular attention to it; and on the pilaster I saw, as an ornament, a shield suspended by a small chain, which the sculptor had fixed to a little lion's muzzle, such as we see on the knocker of a door, or on the cock of a fountain.

Intrigue had also its secret committees, where our most revered maxims, and most sacred institutions, were stripped of all respect. There neither morality nor religion was spared. It was there represented, according to the doctrine of Mirabeau, that politics are incompatible with morality, religion with patriotism, and old prejudices with new virtues. Royalty and tyranny, obedience and slavery, power and oppression, were there declared to be inseparable, under the government of a single man.

On the contrary, if the people should regain its rights of equality and independence, hopes and promises were madly exaggerated. It seemed that men of the golden age were to be revived for our governors. This free, just, and enlightened people, ever in harmony with itself, ever prudent in the choice of its councils and ministers, and temperate in the use of its power, would never be misled, never deceived, never subjugated or enslaved by the authorities in which it should confide. Its will would form its laws, and its laws would secure its happiness.

Although I was almost isolated, and that my party in the electoral assembly was every day becoming more feeble, I did not cease to tell those who would listen to me, how gross and easy this art of imposing by impudent declamation appeared to me. My principles were known, I dissembled none of them; and care was taken to whisper in every ear that I was the

friend of the ministry, and loaded with the favours of the king. The elections were terminated. I was not elected: the abbé Sièyes was preferred to me; I thanked heaven for my exclusion; for I thought I foresaw what would pass in the national assembly, and shortly afterwards I was more fully informed.

We had in the French Academy one of the most violent partisans of the republican faction: it was Chamfort, a man of most delicate, subtle, and enchanting wit, when he gaily indulged it on the vices and follies of society; but morose and bitterly malevolent against the superiorities of rank and fortune, that wounded his jealous pride. Of all the envious men scattered through society, Chamfort was one who least pardoned the rich and great for the opulence of their houses, and the delicacies of their tables, of which he himself delighted to partake. In their presence, and in his private intercourse with them, he humoured, flattered, and studied to please them; it seemed even that he loved and esteemed some of them, whose praises he pompously repeated: yet, if he had the complaisance to be their guest or their inmate, it was well understood that it was to obtain by their interest some literary compensation from the court; and the pensions he enjoyed, to the amount of some hundred pounds, did not acquit them of this obligation: what he received was too little for him. "Those people," said he to Florian, "ought to get me eight hundred a year; I do not deserve less." At this price, there were some of the great whom he would honour with his preference, and except from his satires. But, as for the caste in general, he lashed it without pity; and when he thought he saw these fortunes and this grandeur on the point of being overthrown, and neither of them any longer capable of serving him, he divorced himself from them wholly, and became a partisan of the people.

In our societies, we sometimes amused ourselves with the sallies of his humour: and, without liking

him, I treated him with caution and politeness, because I did not wish to make him my enemy.

One day, then, when we were alone at the Louvre after the sitting of the Academy: "Well," said he, "so you are not a deputy?"—"No," answered I, "and I console myself as the fox did when he could not reach the grapes: they are too sour."—"Indeed," replied he, "I do not think them ripe enough for you. Your soul is of a temper too mild and flexible for the trial to which it would be submitted. You should be reserved for another legislature. Excellent to improve, you do not understand how to destroy."

As I knew that Chamfort was the friend and confidant of Mirabeau, one of the chiefs of the faction, I imagined myself at the source of the information I wished to obtain; and, to induce him to explain himself, I feigned not to understand him. "You alarm me," said I, "by talking of destroying; I thought the only wish was to repair."

"Yes," he replied, "but repairs only produce ruins: in attacking an old wall, it is impossible to say that it will not fall under the hammer: and, I must frankly own the edifice is here so dilapidated, that I should not be astonished if it should prove necessary to pull it down to the ground."—"Down to the ground!" exclaimed I.—"Why not," rejoined Chamfort, "and erect it on a less gothic and more regular plan? Would it, for instance, be so great an evil that it should not have so many stories, and that there should be but one floor? Would it grieve you to hear no more of your eminence, your grace, and your lordship, nor of titles, heraldry, nobility, feodal tenure, or of the high and low clergy!"—I observed, "that equality had always been the chimera of republics, and the lure that ambition offered to vanity. But this level is impossible in a vast monarchy; and that to wish to abolish all, is

going much farther than the nation intended, and much farther than it asked."

"As for that," replied he; "does the nation know what it wishes? Its wishes will be directed, and it will be made to say what it has never imagined; if it hesitate, it will be answered as Crispin answers the legatee: it is your lethargy. The nation is a great flock, that thinks only of feeding, and that shepherds with good dogs can lead at their will. And, besides, it is its real happiness that all wish to secure unknown to itself; for, indeed, my good friend, neither your old regulations, your religion, your morality, nor all your antiquated prejudices, deserve any indulgence. They are each but a wretched disgrace to an age like ours; and, to trace a new plan, it is requisite to clear the ground completely."

"Clear the ground completely!" insisted I: "What! the throne and the altar?"—"The throne and the altar," answered he, "will fall together: they are two buttresses, that support each other; break but one of them, and the other gives way."

I concealed the impression which this language made on me, and to draw him on still farther: "You announce," said I, "an enterprise in which I think I see more difficulties than means."

"Believe me," replied he, "the difficulties are foreseen, and the means are calculated." He then developed himself, and I learnt that the calculations of the faction were founded on the character of the king, which was so distant from violence, that it was considered as pusillanimous; on the actual state of the clergy, which only consisted, he said, of a few virtues without talents, and a few talents disgraced and dishonoured by vices; and finally, on the condition of the high nobility, which was said to be degenerated, and in which few great characters supported the lustre of a great name.

The third estate ought most especially to place

confidence in itself. This order, long wearied with an arbitrary authority, the tyranny of which extended to its minutest ramifications, had over the other two not only the advantage of number, but that of union, and that of courage and audacity to brave the worst. "In short," said Chamfort, "this accumulation of impatience and indignation, formed like a storm, and that storm ready to burst, confederation and insurrection everywhere declared, and, at the signal given by the province of Dauphiny, the whole kingdom ready to answer, by acclamation, that it demands to be free, the provinces leagued, their correspondence established, and from Paris, as from their center, the republican spirit bearing to the distant cities its warmth and light: such is the state of our cause. Are these vain and airy projects?"

I confessed that in speculation they were truly awful; but added, that, beyond the bounds of temperate reform, the best part of the nation would suffer no innovation to be made in the laws of the country, and in the fundamental principles of the monarchy.

He agreed that in the quiet circle of their families, their shops, their offices, and their manufactories, great numbers of those peaceful domestic citizens would probably find all projects too bold, which might disturb their enjoyments and repose. "But if they should disapprove them," said he, "it will only be timidly, and without noise, while, to overawe and beguile them, there is that determined class, which sees nothing that it can lose by change, and thinks it sees everything to be gained.

"To raise this mob, the most powerful springs of human action will not be neglected; scarcity, famine, money, reports of alarm and affright, the madness of fear and of rage afford pictures that will be diligently presented to the view. You have heard only elegant speakers among the citizens; but, be assured, that all our orators of the tribune are nothing in comparison

with the Demostheneses at half-a-crown a head, who, in the brandy shops, the public squares, the gardens, and on the quays, announce devastation and fire, villages sacked and inundated with blood, and plots to besiege and starve Paris. These are what I call eloquent men. Besides, money and the hope of plunder are all-powerful among this description of people. We have just made a trial of it in the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and you would scarcely believe how little it has cost the duke d'Orleans to get the manufactory of that honest Reveillon sacked and pillaged, which, among this same people, insured the maintenance of a hundred families. Mirabeau ludicrously maintains, that with a thousand guineas one may effect a very pretty sedition."

"Thus," said I, "your experiments are crimes, and your trained forces villains."—"Which is very necessary," answered he, coolly. "What would you do with the mass of people if muzzled with your principles of honesty and justice? Virtuous men are feeble, personal, and timid; 'tis knaves only that are determined. The advantage of the people is to have no morality. How will you defend yourself against men to whom all means are welcome? Mirabeau is right: there is not one of our old virtues that can serve us: the mob has no need of them, or it needs others of another stamp. All that is necessary to effect a revolution, all that is useful and appropriate to that purpose, is the grand principle."

"It is perhaps that of the duke d'Orleans," replied I; "but I see no other leader for this people in insurrection, and, I confess, I have no very high opinion of his courage."—"You are right," said he; "and Mirabeau, who knows him well, says, that to reckon on him would be building on sand; but he has shewn himself popular, he bears a name that imposes, he has thousands to scatter, he hates the king, he hates the queen still more, and, if he should want courage, there are those who will give it him;

for even among the people there will be intrepid chiefs, above all from the moment when they shall have shewn themselves rebels, and shall think themselves criminal; for there is no retiring, when we see behind us no retreat but the scaffold. Fear, without hope of safety, is the true courage of the people. Our forces will be immense, if the number of our accomplices be so. But," added he, "I see that which gives me hope makes you sad; you wish for no liberty that is earned by a waste of blood and treasure. Do you want to have revolutions made up for you with rose water?"

Here our conversation ended, and we separated; he, without doubt, full of contempt for my minute scruples, and I very little satisfied with his hardy immorality. The wretch punished himself for it by self-destruction, as soon as he saw his errors.

I communicated this conversation to the abbé Maury, on the evening of the same day. "It is but too true," said he, "that they scarcely deceive themselves in their speculations, and that to find few obstacles the faction has well chosen its time. I have observed the two parties. My resolution is fixed to perish in the breach; but I feel the sad conviction that they will take the place by assault, and that it will be abandoned to pillage."

"If that be the case," answered I, "what madness can induce the clergy and the nobility to suffer the king to engage in this contest?"—"What would you have them do?"—"What is done in a fire: I would have them abandon something to the flames: supply the deficit by charging themselves with the public debt; set afloat the vessel of the state; extricate the king from the rocks amid which they have themselves intricated him, and, at whatever price persuade him to abrogate the states-general before they shall be assembled. I would wish them to be informed, that they perish if the states meet, and that there is not a moment to lose in order to dissipate the storm that is ready to

burst." Maury made me some objections: I would hear none. "Well," said he, "since you require it, I will take the step that you recommend, but I shall not be listened to."

Unhappily, he addressed himself to the bishop of * * *, an empty headed man, who treated my opinions as chimeras. He answered, "that things were not as they seemed to be; and that, with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other, the church would defend its rights."

Released from my deputation at the electoral assembly, I retired to the country to seek the repose I wanted; and also stole away from a new society that was forming at my house: it was composed of men that I should have delighted to assemble together in more peaceful times. They were the abbé de Périgord, lately become bishop of Autun, the count de Narbonne, and the marquis de la Fayette. I had seen them in society, as free as myself from intrigue and care: the first, of a prudent, mild, and amiable understanding; the second, of a lively, brilliant, and ingenuous gaiety; and the last, with a cordiality full of charm and grace; and all three of the most engaging manners.

But, in their rendezvous at my house, I saw their tempers clouded by a tinge of politics; and, from some expressions that escaped them, I suspected a change with which my principles did not harmonize. They perceived, as well as myself, that in their conferences and political relations, my house was not a place of rendezvous for them. By my retreat we were separated.

On those days of the week when I went to the Academy, I used to sleep at Paris; and I frequently passed the evenings at M. Necker's. There, in the ministerial circle, I spoke to them with openness of heart of all I had seen and all I had heard. I found them quite stupified, and not knowing which way to turn. What was passing at Versailles had

undeceived M. Necker, and I perceived his consternation. Being invited to dine at his house with the principal deputies of the commons, I thought I could there remark, from the coldness with which they answered his politeness and attentions, that they were willing enough to have him for their steward, but not for their guide.

M. de Montmorin, to whom I spoke to engage the king to retire into one of his fortified towns, and at the head of his armies, raised as objections the want of money, bankruptcy, and civil war.

"Do you think then," asked he, "that the danger is so imminent as to require so sudden a recourse to extremes?"—"I think it so imminent and so pressing," said I, "that in a month from this time I would neither answer for the liberty of the king, for his life, nor for your own."

Alas! Chamfort had made me a prophet. But I was not listened to; or rather I was heard by a weak minister, though he was not a weak man.

In the meantime, the deputies of the three orders had repaired to Versailles, nearly in the number prescribed: three hundred of the order of the clergy, three hundred of the order of the nobility, and six hundred of the order of the third estate, including those of the city of Paris, who did not arrive till a few days afterward.

The opening of the assembly took place on the fifth of May. Never had the nation been so fully represented; never had its representatives been intrusted with affairs so weighty; never too had so much talent and knowledge been united to labour in concert at the great work of public utility; never, in fine, did a better and more virtuous king offer himself as a coadjutor. What happiness has a blind system of revolution destroyed!

The king, in all the splendour and pomp of majesty, accompanied by the queen and the two princes his brothers, by the princes of the blood, the peers

of the realm, the officers of the crown, the keeper of the seals, and the minister of finance, repaired to the hall of the assembled states.

He appeared with simple dignity, without pride, without timidity, bearing on his countenance the character of the native goodness of his soul, and tenderly moved by the sight and feeling which the presence of the representatives of a faithful nation should necessarily inspire in its king.

Nothing could be more true than the air, the tone, the simple and cordial expression, the accent of the soul, with which he pronounced the speech that I am going to transcribe.

"Gentlemen, this day, for which my heart has long wished, is at length arrived, and I see myself surrounded by the representatives of the nation, which I consider it as my glory to command. A long interval has elapsed since the last session of the states-general; and, although the convocation of these assemblies has fallen into disuse, I have not hesitated to re-establish a custom from which the kingdom may derive new force, and which may open to the nation a new source of happiness.

"The debt of the state, immense as it was at my accession to the throne, has still increased under my reign; an expensive but honourable war has been its cause; an augmentation of the taxes has been the necessary effect, and has rendered their unequal distribution more oppressive. A general inquietude, an immoderate desire of innovation have seized on the public mind, and would end by totally misleading opinions, if we did not hasten to fix them by a reunion of wise and temperate counsels.

"It is in this confidence, gentlemen, that I have assembled you; and I see with sensibility that it has been already justified by the dispositions that the two first orders have shewn to renounce their pecuniary interests. The hope that I have indulged of seeing all the orders unite in sentiments to concur

with me to the general good of the state, will not be deceived.

"I have already ordered considerable retrenchments in the expenditure. On this subject you will present to me the ideas your wisdom may suggest, and I shall receive them with eagerness. But notwithstanding the resources which the severest economy may offer, I fear, gentlemen, that I shall not be able to relieve my subjects so speedily as I could wish.

"I shall direct the exact state of the finances to be laid before you; and when you shall have examined it, I am already confident that you will propose to me the most efficacious means of establishing permanent order, and of confirming public credit. This great and salutary work, which will secure the happiness of the kingdom within, and its consideration without, will occupy you essentially.

"The public mind is agitated; but an assembly of the representatives of the nation will, without doubt, only listen to the counsels of wisdom and of prudence. You must yourselves have felt, gentlemen, that these counsels have been swerved from on many recent occasions. But the reigning spirit of your deliberations will correspond with the true sentiments of a generous nation, whose love for its king has ever been its distinguishing character. I discard every other recollection.

"I know the authority and the power of a virtuous king, in the midst of a faithful people attached at all times to the principles of monarchy. From these principles the glory of France is derived; as I ought, I will constantly be their support. All that can be expected from the deepest interest in the public welfare, all that can be asked of a sovereign, the first friend of his people, you may and ought to hope from my feelings.

"That complete harmony may reign in this assembly, and that this epoch may become ever memorable

for the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom, is the wish of my heart; it is the most ardent of my prayers; it is, in short, the prize that I expect from the rectitude of my own intentions and my love for my people."

These words of the king made the most favourable impression on the assembly.

The keeper of the seals, according to custom, developed the intentions of the king; he observed that, in ancient times, military service being at the expense of the nobility, and the subsistence of widows, orphans, and the indigent, being provided for out of the property of the church, this kind of contribution acquitted them towards the state; but now that the church had considerable wealth, and that the nobility obtained honorary and pecuniary reward, the possessions of these two orders ought to be subject to the common law of taxation. Among the objects which ought to fix the attention of the assembly, he indicated the useful changes that civil legislation and the proceedings in criminal law might require; and, in acknowledging the necessity of rendering the administration of justice more facile, of correcting its abuses, of limiting its expenses, of exhausting the source of those never-ending discussions which ruined families, and of enabling the accused to obtain a prompt trial, he tacitly rendered homage to the principles of Lamoignon.

Lastly, by the express order of the king, the director-general of the finances rose and exposed their actual situation; and, without dissembling the evil, indicated its remedy. Over this picture, so alarming in shade, he spread a 'cheering' light; and with the most afflicting avowals mixed the consolations of a courageous hope. He shewed that the most pressing and most difficult object, the equality to be established between the revenues and the fixed expenditure, did not even require the aid of one new

tax; that the actual deficit would be supplied by simple reductions and light economies. As to the resources that were left him for the exigencies of the present year, for the extraordinary expenses of the two following, for the successive extinction of old debts, for the diminution of those with which the revenues of future years were burthened, and, lastly, for the discharge of those more urgent that were actually due, he indicated them all in the progressive extinction of life annuities, in the profits to be gained by economy, and by new ameliorations in the increased produce of the taxes, when more equally imposed and more regularly collected. In fine, sure of obtaining from time to time, and from national credit, the only legitimate and proper means of relieving the public burthens, he would adopt no others; and he rejected, as unworthy of a king and a magnanimous nation, every species of corruption in the faith of engagements.

"Let greater precaution," said he, "be taken for the future; such is the king's desire, the king's will. But an epoch so solemn, when the nation is summoned to the presence of its sovereign, not for a moment, but for ever; at an epoch when this nation is to associate itself as it were, to the thoughts and wishes of its king, the thing which it will most ardently desire to promote, is the principle of honour and fidelity with which he is animated. This protection granted to the creditors of the state, this long and constant fidelity, will one day be a grand monument to the moral character of his majesty; for by renouncing them, the king would have wanted no succours; and that perhaps is the first counsel that modern machiavelists would not have failed to give him."

To these maxims of justice and probity, Necker added the great interest of the political power of which these principles were the basis; and with the same eloquence with which he had pleaded the cause

of the creditors of the state, he pleaded that of the pensioners. His loyalty was applauded.

But when in speaking of certain conditional instructions, in which the engagements to be formed with respect to the finances were considered as a secondary object, which ought to be preceded by all the concessions and assurances that the nation should require, the minister observed that the exigencies of the finances were only public exigencies; that the expenses of the state did not concern the nation less than the monarch; that its safety, its repose, its defence, all the advantages of its public existence, were dependent on them; and that an obligation so absolute as that of providing for them precluded the freedom of making it conditional; in fine, when in supposing that the king even had more interest than the nation in the re-establishment of order and of credit, and in the discharge of the public debt, Necker dared to say to the deputies:—"No, 'gentlemen'—(and it is good to impress it on your minds, that your love for your august monarch may be still greater)—no, it is not to the absolute necessity of a pecuniary supply that you owe the previous advantage of being assembled by his majesty in states-general." And when he showed them, article by article, that the greatest number of the means of providing for the exigencies of the state, and of supplying the deficit, would have been in the king's hands without committing any injustice, and by simple retrenchments submitted to his authority and to his will, then those who, in their system of sovereignty, wished to make the king submit to the law of necessity, were offended that his minister should wish to release him from the yoke. They had been heard to say, that the nation ought to stone the man who would teach the king to be contented without new supplies.

Necker, it is true, wished to dissuade the assembly from the right which it thought it possessed of refusing its assistance; but, in making the king sup-

port the dignity of the crown, he left the nation all means of containing his legitimate authority within the bounds of equity.

And, indeed, by a common accord between the monarch and the people, the expenditure being fixed, the taxes consented to, the ministers responsible, the statements of the receipt and expenditure published, laid before the nation, and verified by itself; in short, abuses reformed, and the administration of the finances submitted to rules of the most scrupulous economy; what more could be desired? And, if the equality of taxation were agreed to, and the return of the states-general regulated, the press as free as it could be, *lettres de cachet* abolished, or confided to the wisdom of a tribunal; if liberty, public and personal safety, property, equality of all citizens before the law and under the law, were rendered inviolable; if all these benefits were not only offered but secured to the nation, what would have been wanting to complete the surprising success of this first assembly? Nothing but that character of independence and sovereignty which the fanatic partisans of an absolute and despotic democracy wished to have in their decrees.

"In due time," said Necker to them, "his majesty will justly appreciate the character of your deliberations; and, if it be such as he hopes, and such as he has a right to expect, if it be such, in short, as the soundest part of the nation asks and desires, the king will second your intentions and your labours; he will glory in crowning them; and the spirit of the best of princes mixing, as it were, with that which the most faithful of all nations will inspire, we shall see this happy union give birth to the greatest of blessings, the most solid of empires."

It was this language of an authority that reserved to itself examination and free consent, it was this that wounded the pride of the democratic league. Jealous of seeing the sovereign exert his own pure

will where they pretended to command, they accused Necker of presenting despotism under the forms of beneficence. They wanted a king who was no longer king.

However, in spite of Mirabeau, and the violent libel that he published, the speech of the king and that of the minister had, in the assembly, as well as among the public, the suffrages of all good men.

The most numerous concourse of the inhabitants of Paris had pressed in a crowd to Versailles, to enjoy the sight of the opening of the states. And when the king, at the head of the deputies of the nation, repaired after the sitting to the church of Saint Louis, the pomp, the order, the majesty of that august march, the respectful silence of the crowd of spectators that lined the way; the king, in the midst of this national court, full of a sweet and credulous joy, and around him his family, happy in the same enjoyment; all this, I say, together, made so lively and so deep an impression on the hearts of the surrounding multitude, that involuntary tears fell from every eye. · Hope seemed to precede the march of the states-general, and prosperity to follow. But, in the midst of this parade of patriotism and concord, the dull and hollow murmur that precedes tempestuous dissensions fell indistinctly on the ear.

BOOK XV.

At the first step, a dispute arose between the three orders, as had been foreseen, on the manner of forming themselves. The first resolution of the third estate was, never to deliberate by chambers: and, of the nobility and clergy, never to deliberate by individual suffrage: a resolution which would at

once have dissolved the convocation of the states, if both parties had stood firm and inflexible.

But the party of the first orders, already too feeble, weakened itself still more by taking an imprudent position. The third estate, in order to engage it to deliberate in common, began by demanding the verification of the powers of each deputy; and it was evidently right in requiring that this examination should be made together and in common: was it not requisite to recognise each other? What engagement would either party have formed by communicating the titles of its legation? Would not either have still been free after this examination? To this the first orders refused their assent. Instead of waiting for an opportune moment of taking a strong post, they thought they could dispute the ground foot to foot; and an indiscreet difficulty in the beginning was to them a false position, in which they could not defend themselves.

The motive of this conduct was the knowledge which the two first orders had of their deputation.

Among the nobles, a considerable number of ardent minds, animated, some by a spirit of liberty and independence, others by views and calculations of ambition, inclined toward the side of the people, where they hoped to be honoured, distinguished, and raised to the first employments. Among the clergy a still greater number, and, as I have said, the whole crowd of rectors, were attached to the party of the commons by every kind of tie. A rector is the most popular of men, if he be a good man. But a sentiment less laudable, although as natural, was, first, their aversion to the bishops, whose severity often laid them under restraint; and next, their hatred to that middle class of *abbés*, who were the objects of their envy: a class which they said was wholly useless, and the only one that was favoured; indolent, and proud too of its indolence, despising church ministry, and insulting the humble mediocrity, and sometimes even the po-

verty, of the hard condition of a pastor, with all the arrogance of pompous opulence. It was this, above all, which alienated the low clergy, and forced them to range themselves with the order in which nature had placed them, and which besides did not neglect to promise them a gentler lot.

Now, so long as these members should be detained in their respective corps by example, and withheld by shame, there was reason to think that they would remain attached to them; but, if once in deliberation and fellowship with the third estate they saw themselves enveloped by the popular party, it was to be feared that they would unite wholly with it; and this first approach was what the nobles wished to avoid. But the only way of preventing desertion would have been to render it shameful and dishonourable in the public opinion, by displaying a character of frankness and loyalty that would have left no pretext for the baseness of deserters. Conciliatory commissioners were named by the three orders, and their conferences produced nothing.

A monarch, more occupied with himself than with the state, and who, jealous of his authority, would have seen that the states had met at least to restrain and to subjugate it, would have left the three orders to fatigue themselves with their debates and discord, to weary and dissolve this dangerous assembly; but the king, who sincerely wished for the public welfare, hoping to engage the orders to co-operate with him, feared nothing so much as to see them separate and dispute; and, with the same good faith with which he had called them to his aid, he sought the means of reconciliation, pressing them, by all his love, to unite in concord.

The clergy accepted the king's mediation. The nobility, distrustful of the counsels of the minister, only consented to it under restrictions that were equivalent to a refusal. The third estate excused itself from replying to the king's offer, because the nobility,

in modifying by certain reservations the acquiescence it appeared to give, the assent of that order no longer bore the character of conciliation. The order of the clergy felt its weakness; that of the nobility took its courage for force; the third estate was sensible of its own strength, which it used, and abused.

The resolution which it took almost unanimously on the 10th of June, was to terminate useless delays, to wait no longer, and to pass to action; not, however, till one last attempt should have been made, and fresh solicitations exerted, to induce the clergy and the nobility to come and concur in the verification of the respective powers, apprizing them at the same time that the commons would proceed on this examination as well in the absence as in the presence of the privileged classes. It was added, that the commons would expose to the king the motives of this great resolution.

The name of 'commons,' which the third estate had assumed, and the name of 'classes,' which it gave to the two first orders, announced that it would acknowledge no distinction of rank; thus, for the nobility and the clergy there was no expedient left, and no delay to be obtained. It was requisite, either to join the third estate, as they have since done, or, after the verification of the respective powers made in common, to retire, each of the two orders into its chamber, establish themselves with the integral parts of the states-general, spontaneously make the most generous sacrifices to the public welfare, declare themselves subject to taxation in the exactest equality, recognise the obligation of maintaining the national debt, and of providing for the exigencies of the states to the people, ameliorate the condition of the inferior clergy, consecrate the principles of equality in the eye of the law of property, of personal and public safety, and of toleration with respect to religious worship, profess too an inviolable attachment to the fundamental principles of the French monarchy, carry to

the foot of the throne and signify to the third estate these solemn engagements, and most especially to demand the deliberation by chambers, in reserving to the king the unalienable right of granting or of refusing his sanction to the decrees of the states; at the same time to protest against all the acts which should suppose them absent, declare null all those that should engage them without the concurrence of their suffrages, publish these resolutions, and, according to those of the commons, co-operate with them; or, if the third estate should refuse this co-operation, retire with the dignity suitable to men who have fulfilled their task and done their duty freely. Their conduct, proclaimed in the provinces, would there have rendered odious the ambition of the third estate; particularly as the pulpit was still open to courageous truth, which might there have still resounded with success. This happy moment was lost.

The order of the nobility constituted itself, but kept on the defensive. That of the clergy thought it might preserve a feigned neutrality. "It waited," said Tolendal, "till there should be some conqueror, in order to choose its ally."

After this resolution of the tenth, the commons were occupied in verifying their powers. Having finished that operation, and determined that the work of national restoration might and ought to be begun without delay by the deputies present, it was resolved (June the 15th) to pursue it without interruption and without obstacle; but nevertheless, that, if the absent deputies presented themselves during the course of the session that was about to open, the assembly would receive them with joy, and would be eager, after the verification of their powers, with them to share its labours. It was carefully added, that the national representation should be one and indivisible; and that it should belong only to representatives legally verified and legitimately recognised to concur in the expression of the national will.

It only remained to be known what name the assembly should give itself. "The National Assembly," the most ambitious of all, was that which it preferred (June the 17th;) and those, who did not consent that the commons should usurp the title of 'nation,' were inscribed on a list which was circulated about Paris: a form of denunciation that has since been mortal to the freedom of suffrage.

The second act of that omnipotence, which the commons attributed to themselves, was to declare null all contributions that had existed till that time, and to lay down as a principle that, even for the past, not only the tacit assent, but the formal consent, of the nation had been requisite, in order to make the taxes legal.

From this moment it was the duty of the ministry to keep the king on his guard against the usurpation of authority, and to engage him to break up a factious assembly that exceeded the bounds of its functions, and arrogated to itself a power that it did not possess.

But the council, far from being in a state to form a resolution, had not even a plan of conduct or resistance. I have been told by one of the men who, in this assembly, have shewn most courage, knowledge, and talent, I have been told by Malouet, that, having himself one day asked Necker, in the presence of the two other ministers, whether he had any plan of defence against the attacks with which the throne was menaced, Necker owned that he had none. If that be the case, answered Malouet, all is over.

Necker was now no more the minister that the state of affairs required. He had engaged the state in a strait, and among rocks from which he was wholly unable to extricate it.

At the same time, he could not conceal from the king that the assembly was arrogating to itself an exorbitant power; and it was to restrain this usurped authority that, on the twentieth of the month, a royal

sitting was proclaimed for the twenty-second. Till then it was ordered that the halls should be shut, and that the states should not sit. A feeble expedient to prevent the union of a part of the clergy with the commons; for this union was threatened.

The court and council were highly agitated. The nobility and high clergy saw their ruin approaching if the king abandoned them, and demanded his support. It was therefore resolved in council that the king should go in person to mark out to the deputies of the people the limits of their powers; to engage them to concord in the name of the state's welfare, and to manifest his own beneficent intentions to concur to that great end.

It required great prudence to compose this declaration. There were two rocks, which it was requisite to avoid, that of yielding to the commons, and that of exciting them to rebellion. Necker, being charged to prepare the declaration, endeavoured, according to his principles, to temper the character of authority without weakening it; to make the king wish for nothing that was not just and desirable, and to conciliate what belonged to the majesty of the monarch with what seemed to him to be due to the dignity of the representatives of the nation. His declaration was at first adopted; but, in his absence, and in a council that was held at Marly, some changes were made in it, trivial, as it is asserted, but of such a nature, as he himself has told me, that the declaration could no longer produce the effect which he had intended.

Whatever the change might have been, which I have not been able to verify, it is certain that the speech wanted unity, and was ill calculated to attain its end.

On the twentieth, the order of the nobility had obtained an audience from the king, in which its president, the duke de Luxembourg, addressing his majesty, had said: "The deputies of the third estate,

sire, have presumed that they could singly concenter in themselves the whole authority of the states-general. Without waiting for the concurrence of the two other orders and the sanction of your majesty, they have thought that they could convert their decrees into laws. They have ordered them to be printed, and sent in to the provinces. They have declared null and illegal the taxes that actually exist. They have consented to them conditionally for the nation, by limiting their duration; they have supposed without doubt that they could attribute to themselves the joint rights of the king and of the three orders. It is in the hands of your majesty that we depose our protests against such usurpations."

The nobility added the strongest assurances of zeal, of fidelity, of courage, and of obedience.

"I know," answered the king, "the rights attached to my birth; I will defend them; I will maintain them, for the interest of all my subjects, the authority that is confided to me, and will never suffer it to be impaired. I depend on your zeal for the country, and on your attachment to my person; and I expect, with confidence, from your fidelity, that you will adopt the projects of conciliation with which I am occupied for the happiness of my people."

Both the speech and the answer supposed measures and means of which the government should have been secure. The maxim, that the authority which exposes its own weakness does but hasten and complete its fall, was unfortunately forgotten.

Till the royal sitting, the commons having no decent place in which they could assemble, took the first that offered. It was a tennis-court, now rendered famous by the oath which they there took, never to be separated, and to assemble whenever the circumstances should require it, till the constitution of the kingdom and the re-generation of order should be established and confirmed on a solid basis. The

government was far from being prepared to counteract these vigorous proceedings.

The sitting announced for Monday the 22d, having been postponed to the following day, the assembly transferred itself from the tennis-court to the church of St Louis, in order no doubt that the sanctity of the place might give a more awful character to what was going to pass there.

It was scarcely established before the doors of the sanctuary were opened, and it beheld the archbishops of Bordeaux and Vienne, and the bishops of Chartres and Rhodez, enter and advance at the head of a hundred and forty-five deputies of the clergy. The commons received them with the joy of sacrificers to whom victims are led; and the people who filled the church seemed to wish, by their applauses, to render them insensible to the fate that awaited them. The body of the commons, increased by this reinforcement, was confirmed in the resolution to sit the next day.

Necker did not think proper to accompany the king thither. I ought, without approving it, to explain the motive of so strange a conduct. He had openly maintained, in council, that the union of the three chambers in one only was inevitable; and that by deferring it the state would be exposed to the greatest danger; that all must perceive that the commons were irrevocably decided not to recognise the deliberation by orders, and that the authority of the king would be uselessly compromised by an attempt to compel obedience; that, if the resistance were the same on the part of the two first orders, the result of it would either be, that the states would be held without their concurrence, or that they would be dissolved; that the one would lead to the ruin of the clergy and nobility, and the other to that of the kingdom; that all resources were exhausted, and the fatal moment approaching, when the most

urgent payments, those of the royal treasury, those of the town-hall, even the provision for the troops, the subsistence of Paris, all were about to stop; that famine, bankruptcy, perhaps, civil war, would threaten the kingdom, if the states were broken up, or were not very soon united; and, after having struck the king and the council with these alarming truths, he had induced them to adopt a declaration in which he had endeavoured to respect both the royal dignity and the republican pride.

Now, it was this, above all, that had been changed in the declaration. The principle that would be most ardently contested was supposed incontestable; the king was there made to desire all that the nobles wished, and to annul or prohibit all that displeased them. This was supposing in him both the actual power and the firm resolution of breaking up and dissolving the assembly, in case it should resist his authority. But the one was as unstable as the other. Bankruptcy and civil war were like two spectres that frightened the king.

Necker then, having learned that his work was changed, and that the royal authority was opposed to public liberty, thought it his duty to abstain from appearing at this sitting, where his presence would have encouraged the belief that he adhered to what was done in spite of him. His conduct has induced some to say that he had wished singly to attract the favour of the people; others, that he had given the signal for rebellion; and the most moderate that, solely occupied by his own fame, he had sacrificed everything to his personal interest.

The declaration was read to the assembly in the king's presence; and it was not difficult to recognise in it two incoherent characters. It was divided into two parts. In the first, as I have said, the most absolute power was displayed. In the other, and in the train of those formules of despotism already too rigorously employed in the *lits de justice*, were an

affecting exposition of the good intentions of the king, and of the measures that he wished to take, to produce and secure the prosperity of the kingdom; and, after having called the states-general to co-operate with him in the great works of public utility, the king was desirous, that all the laws which he should have sanctioned in the present session of the states might never be legally changed without the united consent of the three orders. With respect to the public force alone, the protectress of order and safety, whether at home or abroad, he expressly declared that he would preserve, entire and unblemished, the institution of the army, as well as all authority of the police, and of discipline over the soldier, such as the monarchs of France had constantly enjoyed.

Had the states been willing to receive from the king a limited and mild monarchy, that the king gave. But they did not think it worthy of them to be indebted to him for so temperate a change; and, whatever the new constitution might be, which they had not yet meditated, they meant that it should be their own work, and not a donation from the king. Thus all the attention of the assembly was directed to that part of the declaration which recalled arbitrary power. The mild and feeling sentiments that were added, were considered only as a bait to lure obedience, and as a weak and vain palliative for acts of despotism that the king came to exercise.

The commons were above all wounded at this conclusion of the king, when addressing them himself he said:

"You have just heard, gentlemen, the result of my dispositions and views. They are consonant with the lively desire that I feel to promote the public welfare; and if, by a fatality that is far from my thoughts, you should abandon me in so glorious an enterprise, singly I will ensure the happiness of my people, singly I will consider myself as their true representative; and knowing your instructions, know-

ing the perfect harmony that exists between the general will of the nation and my beneficent intentions, I shall feel all the confidence that so rare a concord ought to inspire, and shall proceed to the goal I hope to attain with all the courage and firmness that I ought to possess. . . . Till now, it is I who do all for the welfare of my people, and it is rare perhaps that the sole ambition of a sovereign is to obtain the consent of his subjects to accept his benefits."

This tone of authority, these words sovereign, subjects, and benefits, seemed offensive to republican ears; and when the king finished, by commanding the three orders to retire to their respective chambers, the tacit resolution of the commons was not to obey. Thus all the fruit of the king's goodwill was lost, and discord increased in a sitting, the intent of which was that it should be stifled.

When the sitting was over, the commons with a respectful but gloomy silence, suffered the order of the nobility to accompany the king, while they themselves remained in the hall, which from that moment was theirs. This they were ordered in the name of the king to quit in vain. There, instantly and on the spot, it was resolved to persist in their preceding decisions; and this resolution was carried with one general voice. At the same time they decreed, that the persons of the deputies should be inviolable, that no one of them, for what he should have said or done in that assembly, could be prosecuted, arrested, or detained, by the executive power, neither during nor after the session: and this decree declared the authors, instigators, or agents of such crimes, to be infamous, and traitors to their country. It was added, that, during the session, the persons of the deputies should be secure from all criminal and civil prosecution, unless the assembly annulled the exemption. This motion was made by Mirabeau, a man more interested than any other in placing a barrier between the laws and himself.

A numerous crowd of the people, sent from Paris to Versailles, had surrounded the hall of the states during the royal sitting. It still encompassed the assembly, when it was informed that Necker was going to resign. This report was well founded.

The king, struck with astonishment at not seeing in his suite the minister of his finances, and still more surprized at not finding him in the palace on his return, had anxiously inquired of Montmorin whether Necker had determined to leave him; and, Montmorin having hinted that he believed so, the king had charged him to go and tell Necker that he expected him.

It was at seven o'clock in the evening, at the moment when Necker was alone with the king, that the people thronged in crowds into the courts and interior of the palace, crying out that the king was deceived, and that the nation asked him to have Necker back again.

The conversation of the king with his minister lasted a whole hour. The people awaited the issue of it. At length the inhuman crowd saw the king go off to Trianon without saluting him with that cry of *vive le roi* which he so well deserved; and the instant afterwards they saw Necker come down the staircase, and get into his chair. It was for him that vows and benedictions then burst forth. He has been accused of wishing to enjoy his triumph, and, had it been designed, it would have been truly insolent; but, although Necker might have returned modestly home by the galleries, without shewing himself to the people, there has, I think, been too much severity in imputing to him as a crime the want of this respectful attention to the king.

Necker, assailed by the gratitude and plaudits of the people, accompanied even to his house, which the same crowd invested, had no sooner arrived there than he saw hastening to him, not a deputation from the assembly, but the assembly entire, that, pressing

eagerly around him, beseeched him, in the name of the country, in the name of the king himself, in the name of the state's safety, not to abandon them. This was only a stage trick, to render the royalist party odious; for the design of ruining the minister himself if he were not devoted to the popular party, was nevertheless formed in the council of the faction.

Necker wished to make them understand that singly he had no longer the power to effect any good. "We will aid you," cried Target, assuming the right of speaking in the name of all; "and for that purpose there are no efforts, no sacrifices, that we are not disposed to make."—"Sir," said Mirabeau to him, with the mask of frankness, "I do not like you, but I bow to virtue."—"Stay, M. Necker," cried the crowd; "we conjure you, stay!"—The minister, deeply affected, "Speak for me, M. Target," said he, "for I cannot speak for myself."—"Well, gentlemen, I stay," cried Target; "this is M. Necker's answer." It has since been known how sensibly the heart of the king was wounded by this scene, which was in part the intention of the actors.

There was no hope of breaking the union of the commons, nor of conquering their resistance. They every day received from the different cities of the kingdom bespoken felicitations on their courageous firmness. In these addresses it was said, that, if snares should be laid around the national assembly, it had only to turn its head, and it would perceive behind it twenty-five millions of Frenchmen, who, with their eyes fixed on its decisions, awaited in silence to learn their own fate, and that of their posterity. It could not be expected that a party thus declared, would either recede or bend.

In the other party, resolution was far from being thus unanimous, or resistance equally firm. You have seen the division that took place in the order of the clergy. That of the nobility was scarcely more sure of itself; sixty deputies of this order had openly

disavowed in their chamber the refusal that had been given to the king's meditation. On the part of the clergy, the day after the royal sitting, one hundred and sixty rectors had repaired to the common hall. Two days afterwards, two more bishops, those of Orange and Autun, had gone thither. On the same day the humble and mild archbishop of Paris had there presented his credentials. On the side of the nobility, forty-seven 'gentilshommes,' and in that number some distinguished men, had joined the commons. The remainder of the two first orders could not delay to follow this example. And, in the critical state in which the affairs then were, all delay was dangerous. The king, in order to induce their compliance, did what he should have done before the royal sitting. The letter which he addressed to them, by sparing them the humiliation of yielding to the commons, afforded them an opportunity of honouring themselves by a sentiment of love for him, and of respect for his will. It was to him that they yielded; and that day (the 27th of June) was marked by the re-union of the three orders in the common-hall of the states-general.

This solemn meeting took place at first amid profound silence. But, when it was completed, this respectful silence was suddenly succeeded by an explosion of joy that quickly spread and communicated itself without.

The people, still susceptible of honourable and kind emotions, have just learned that their triumph is the king's work; and doubly happy to obtain and owe it to him, press towards that palace, whither a few days before they had been borne by their alarms. They now make it resound with the vow that is dearest to Frenchmen. They ask to see the good king, to shew him how he deserves to be loved, and to make him witness the transports he causes.

The king appears on the balcony of his apartment, the queen is by his side; and both hear their names

resound to the sky. Kindred tears mix with their embraces, and, by an impulse at which all hearts are moved, the queen presses in her arms the object of their gratitude. Then this people, that since have shewn themselves so cruel, and that were still essentially good, (I love to repeat it), seized that instant to recompense the queen for her feelings as a wife, by gratifying those of a mother. They ask to see her son. They ask to see the dauphin. That precious and feeble child, borne in the arms of the queen, is presented by maternal love to national tenderness. Happy that he was not designed to live long enough to see what would be the changes of this deceitful favour.

After the good king, the good minister, cries the multitude; and with one common impulse it precipitates itself towards the treasury, which soon resounds too with vows and benedictions.

During the whole night of this great day, Versailles was illuminated, and presented everywhere nothing but the picture of public felicity.

Nothing is more grateful than the sight of a nation strongly animated by generous feelings; but enthusiasm in the people is dangerous, even when it is most laudable; for the multitude knows no interval between extremes, and suffers itself to be borne from one excess to another, as the passion of the moment directs. It then felt all the value of liberty; but that recent liberty with which it was intoxicated soon degraded it, by fermenting in it the elements of every vice.

Already, under the specious name of public welfare, a spirit of licence, faction, and anarchy, was spread among the crowd. The independence and perpetuity of a national assembly in which the commons should govern, and in that assembly the sovereignty of the people transmitted and concentered in the will of its representatives with the character of the most frightful despotism; a constitution which would convert

the kingdom into an armed democracy, under a shade of monarchy, governed in reality by an aristocratic corps periodically elective, but always elected to suit the reigning party; such was the project formed by the republican faction. This faction had well calculated the obstacles it had to encounter; and in the attacks which it would have to make or to sustain, it foresaw that it would want a populace drunk with liberty, and mad with rage.

It was then that I comprehended what Chamfort had told me of the system of the factious to deliver the populace to the furies of discord, and keep it incessantly in convulsive agitation, either of alarm or of blind audacity.

To the vexation that troubles bring in a time of scarcity, to the dearness of bread, to the fear of famine, to that anxiety which the difficulty of procuring provisions might well excite, and which was carefully exaggerated, they added, in order to irritate the people, the blackest suppositions of plots invented against their liberties. They frightened the populace, in order to render it terrible, and it every day became more jealous and more wild with distrust and suspicion.

The villains, known by the name of Marseillais, called to Paris to become the agents of the republican faction, wretches deep in rapine and carnage, and as greedy of blood as of booty, in mixing with the people inspired their own ferocity.

The presence of the courts of justice still overawed the populace, and deprived it of audacity; but all who observed its march expected every moment to see it overleap that feeble barrier; and the crowd of vagabonds, mixing with the factious and ready to serve them, augmented every day: the wharfs, the quays, were covered with them; the town-hall was invested by them; they seemed to assemble round it to insult the inaction of disarmed justice; twelve thousand of them were kept uselessly occupied in

digging the hill of Montmartre, and paid at the rate of tenpence a day. They were posted there as a rear-guard, which the faction could advance at will. In the night, a wild and threatening multitude assembled in the Palais-Royal. Its porticos were thronged, and the garden filled ; a hundred groups were formed there to hear slanderous accusations and turbulent propositions. The most passionate declaimers were there the most popular. The crowd was fed with a thousand calumnies that imposture invented and spread. It was there that seditious declaimers railed against the royal authority, and imputed to it as a crime the dearness of corn, and the poverty of the people. It was there that to the mutinous, intoxicated with mad hopes or troubled with dark terrors, they marked out the victims whom they devoted to death. There no public men, not even the most honest and most respectable, were sure of being spared. It was from that place crowds issued, either terrified themselves, or paid to spread affright and sedition in Paris.

But that which exceeds probability is, that even Versailles, where the people held their whole existence from the court, should shew itself most violently imbued with republican maxims.

While a part of the clergy still deliberated on the union of the three orders, this very people had been seen to insult those who were said to oppose it, and to attack the good archbishop of Paris, and pursue him with stones to his carriage, on false accusations. It had been observed that the French guards, far from curbing sedition, encouraged it by signs of connivance; and it was known that these soldiers, welcomed and caressed in the Palais-Royal, and treated in the coffee-houses, called themselves the friends of the people. The king, without feeling any anxiety for himself, might therefore wish that, in Paris and in Versailles, the people should be submitted to the

usual police, and that, restored to order, they should peacefully return to their labours.

The king might think that a faction ever present and ever threatening did not leave the deliberations of the national assembly that freedom which ought to be their essence; that personal safety was the foundation of that freedom; that safety ought to be equally inviolable for all; and that the sovereign was its guarantee. He might think that the hall of the assembly, which was open like a theatre, ought not to be a rendezvous of sedition. He therefore found it at once just and prudent to order that freedom of opinion and personal safety should be protected by a respectful guard. At the same time he ordered that the soldiers of the French guards, who were rambling about Paris, should be restored to discipline, and punished if they deviated from it.

But neither the people nor their leaders would suffer any constraint. The guard that surrounded the hall was forced; and the assembly sent a deputation to the king to declare, that the states, convoked free, could not act freely, amid the troops that surrounded them. The guard was withdrawn; and it was requisite to leave the hall open to the crowds that flocked thither.

The king felt that the disorder would but continue to increase, if the people were left exempt from all fear; that it was no longer by concessions that the populace could be appeased; that at least in using indulgence towards the factious, it was necessary to shew them that he could use rigour; and that, not being sure of obedience from the French guards, it was time to order some troops to advance on which he could depend. He therefore marched some to his aid; but, at first, in a very small number, and very sincerely with the sole intention of protecting public order and the tranquillity of the citizens. Of this no one doubted. But tranquillity and order would have

given a death blow to that revolution which the faction meditated.

The king had answered the nobility, that he knew his rights and that he would maintain them. He had told the states-general, that not one of their projects, that none of their resolutions, could have the force of law, without his special approbation, and that all the orders of the state might rely on his equitable impartiality. Now, in this system of authority and protecting power, and in opposition to a popular faction, which considered itself as the sole, absolute, and supreme legislative body, and as the depositary of the national will, the king in order to hold this language, should not be disarmed; and, in case he should be forced to act as he had spoken, like a good king, yet truly a monarch, it was necessary that he should have the power so to do. This was precisely what the mutinous and revolutionary party would not suffer. Its forces consisted in that mass of the people which blindly follows those who declare in its favour: and if Versailles were guarded, if Paris were calm or repressed by troops of the line, the faction would remain without means and without hope.

It was not yet to crime that this party excited the people. It was still aware that anarchy had its dangers. But, in order to intimidate the king and honest men, were it at first to cost some ruin, even a little innocent blood, republican freedom was of such value, that some light sacrifices might well be made to it: such were the politics, and such the morality of the greater number; and they were the most moderate: the others thought everything allowable that was useful to them; and at their head Mirabeau openly professed as modern virtues the contempt of the holiest duties, and most pious rights.

It was requisite, they said, to nourish the fire of patriotism; and, in order to support it by the freedom granted to the press, slanderous libels were every

day spread, in which whoever dared to dispute the power of the people to oppress was devoted to public hatred and to public vengeance. The noble, who with some warmth defended the cause of the nobles—any member of the clergy, who with some eloquence pleaded the cause of the clergy—were nothing less in these accusations than traitors to the country. Even in the third estate temperate opinion passed for cowardice, and rendered him who professed it suspicious. Thus, on the side of the commons, constraint and violence encompassed the two first orders, while the commons were those who seemed to repulse violence and constraint. All that could animate, irritate, and rouse the populace, was permitted and provoked; all that could curb and repress its passions, excited the states themselves to make the warmest remonstrances. They called liberty the right of extinguishing all liberty. The sense of these remonstrances was not equivocal—"We desire to effect everything by means of the people, and that nothing may be effected but with us, and by us."

But, in convoking the states-general, did the king intend to form a democracy, and give to the commons that threatening despotism which they pretended to exercise? "Where, sire," said the oppressed orders to him, "where is now that security which you have guaranteed to us? Where is that equality which the commons have demanded? Can a shade of it exist for two orders who would hear themselves denounced, devoted to the fury of the people, if they did not tacitly consent to whatever the third estate should desire? Without doubt, around the hall of this legislative assembly there should have needed no military guard. But neither was it necessary to collect troops of villains watching a pretence to stone and insult us." That peaceful guard, which was said to be offensive to the assembly of the states, was there only to secure the calm of debate, and the freedom of suffrage. Did the re-

publican faction wish that it should be subject to no constraint? The troops then should have been withdrawn, and at the same time that multitude dispersed that came even into the assembly, to encourage its partisans, select and mark out its victims, and render frightful to the weak the formidable trial of the *appel nominal*.

The orators of the people made perpetual eulogies on its goodness, and on its natural equity; and these eulogies were without doubt due to that class of citizens which is composed of the better order of the people. But, below that class, who did not see those villains who in Paris had lately sacked the house of a peaceful and good citizen? And those who in the gardens of the Palais-Royal sowed calumny and breathed revolt? And those who at Versailles would stone a pious and charitable archbishop? And those who, having rescued a parricide from death, had borne him away from punishment? And those who since, in Paris at the doors of the town-hall, and at Versailles even in the palace of the king, have committed so many atrocities? And those who have applauded after having provoked them, and have rejoiced to see the heads of those so inhumanly massacred carried about on pikes?

It was therefore, said the two orders that claimed common safety, a most cruel derision, thus to confound the part of the people whom it was requisite to curb with that portion which ought to be protected. By a gross abuse of words, the populace was called the people, and this people the nation, which was declared sovereign.

The police of Paris demanded a guard of citizens. But, till this guard was organized, what anxiety could the small number of troops excite which the king had marched there? All was tranquil there since they arrived. But this military police did not suit the taste of the commons. Their emissaries did not cease to agitate the Palais-Royal, that infamous resort

of crime: thither they allured the soldiers of the guards, and detained them all night. This is what the duke du Châtelet, their colonel, could not endure: he ordered two of these vagabond soldiers to be arrested there at an undue hour; and they were led to the prison of the Abbaye. This was the signal for insurrection. The most common act of military authority was treated as a foul attack on liberty, and in less than an hour the prison of the two soldiers (who were called the friends of the people) was besieged by twenty thousand men. The jailors having resisted, axes and levers were quickly procured, the doors were forced open, and all the prisoners, even the criminals, escaped during the night.

The next day, at the opening of the national assembly, the deputies of this mutinous crowd arrived at Versailles. In their address, which was delivered to the president, it was said that those two unhappy victims of despotism had been torn from their irons; that amid loud acclamations they had been brought back to the Palais-Royal, where they were under the guard of the people, who had become responsible for them. "We await," added they, "your answer, to restore peace to our fellow-citizens, and freedom to our brothers."

The president's answer was that, by invoking the king's clemency, the assembly would give an example of that respect which was due to the royal authority, and that it conjured the inhabitants of Paris to revert instantly to peace and order. This feeble answer was at least sincere and conformable to the will of the commons; for the assembly did not know that the populace was urged to rebel by the most distinguished and most infamous villains, and that the madness which they infused was employed by these leaders to inspire the court with a dread of insurrection. The assembly itself was put in action by springs that were unknown to itself. In its name,

and by its authority, the revolutionary faction agitated the people, and by them this same faction governed the assembly. Such has been the mechanism of the revolution.

The king was intreated, in the name of the assembly, to be pleased to employ for the re-establishment of order those infallible means of clemency and goodness which were natural to his heart; and he willingly consented. But, before he yielded to an impulse of kindness, he wished that order should be re-established. This was by no means done. The people, without recommitting the two soldiers to their prison, without renouncing its turbulent nocturnal meetings, and in redoubling, on the country, both its wildness and its violence, demanded the king's promise in a tone that would suffer no delay; and discipline and royal authority were obliged to bend to its will.

It was then that the decisions of the council appeared to assume some energy; but weakness never wholly quits its character; it totters when it attempts to rise, and falls back again more timid after a useless effort.

The adventure of the two soldiers of the guards, the spirit of insubordination with which the people inspired them, the audacity of this people, the tone it had assumed, this way of commanding by supplication, this ardent impatience to obtain what it asked, and the praises that were bestowed on it for allaying its passion after it had been obeyed—in fine, that character of imperious and threatening liberty which it announced on every occasion—had been forcibly seized in the council, as means to persuade the king that the greatest of evils, both for the state and for himself, would be to suffer the authority which he held in his hands to be despised, and that it would infallibly be despised if it were seen disarmed; that the people had already dared to attack it because it had shewn itself weak, and that some formidable

force could alone insure it respect, and command obedience; that the multitude must tremble, or it would make all tremble; that it was not only by laws that states were governed, particularly states so vast; that justice wanted the sword and the buckler; that prudence and equity consisted in knowing how to use force without ever abusing it; that it was this prudence which distinguished good from feeble kings and tyrants; that it would have been desirable, without doubt, that the session of the states should have passed in complete security, without having around them any display of military force; that it was so in countries where the people repose with confidence on the wisdom and fidelity of their representatives; that it would be the same in France as soon as order and tranquillity should be re-established; but that so long as the people, and the most violent and seditious class of the people, should come to enforce the deliberation of the states-general by insult and menace, public force had a right to arm itself that they might be repressed.

" There are those, sire," added they who demanded the exercise of a restraining power, " who think that they can appease as easily as they can irritate the populace; after they shall have made it serve their purpose to subvert the whole kingdom, they will want to bring the tiger back to his cage, and to make him forget how terrible he is in his rage; it will be too late: the ferocious beast will have felt his own force, and the weakness of his chains. Above all, what will he be, if he has tasted blood? He will long make those tremble who shall have dared to unchain him. Teach this people, then, that in your hands it still has justice to dread.

" From the beginning of your reign, sire, you have been persuaded to reduce and to weaken your military establishment: and you, who flattered yourself that you would have only to reign over a faithful and good people, have consented, in the rectitude of your

heart, to this fatal reduction; but discipline and obedience are not extinguished in your armies; and you have still force enough left to repress the audacity of these conspirators. It would be despotism to use these forces against the law; but, employed in the maintenance of order and law, they are the worthy retinue of legitimate authority, the safeguard of the state, and the support of royalty.

"If the members of the national assembly had all your loyalty, sire, they would all unite to demand around the sanctuary of legislation some impenetrable barrier, inaccessible to the troops on one side, and to the people on the other; and then all would be equal. But no: it is in order to leave to this populace full licence and complete impunity, that they wish the troops to be withdrawn. They fear lest it should be cooled and intimidated; they wish that it should dare everything, and fear nothing; it is by the people that they seek to reign. Have we not seen that, from the centre to the extremities of the kingdom, the word liberty, a word which to the populace means only licentiousness, has been resounded as the general signal of insurrection and anarchy? Police among the people, discipline in the armies and throughout the country, the laws of order, had been denounced as the remains of slavery. Independence and contempt for every species of authority—this is what the face of the kingdom presents; and it is on the ruins of the monarchy and from its wrecks that the revolutionary faction boasts it will create a democratic empire. An assemblage of vagabonds, without morals, without employment, and without a home, is called the sovereign people. But the nation desires and demands that the constitution of the kingdom may be regulated and fixed on a fundamental basis, and it should at once be rendered more regular and more stable. It is to this end, sire, that the states are charged to co-operate with you.. By the ancient and venerable constitution of the monarchy, you are

king: the supreme authority, the executive force, has been delivered into your hands: your ancestors, to whom the nation confided it, have transmitted it to you as your inheritance. The nation neither wishes nor means to despoil, to depose, or disinherit its king. And what would a monarch be, if he were not the protector of the rights and liberties of us all?

"Protect, sire, those of every order, and suffer none to be oppressed. Protect those of the states themselves; and protect, especially in the cities, towns, and villages, those of the honest citizens and peaceful labourers who, threatened in their calm retreat by an idle and wandering populace, tremble lest it should soon be too late to check it with the curb of the laws. No, sire: it is no longer in the name of the clergy or of the nobility, it is in the name of a good people, of which you are the father, that we conjure you not to abandon it to the most cruel of tyrannies, to that of the populace and of its perfidious leaders."

It is thus that the king was persuaded that, in displaying to the people a military power, he should only repress and subject force by force, and should leave public liberty protected and uninjured.

BOOK XVI.

The king then ordered some troops to advance; but, while forming a vigorous resolution, the ministers should have foreseen its consequences, calculated step by step the forces and resistances, the difficulties and the dangers, and determined beforehand their march and their positions as events might direct. They calculated nothing, they provided for nothing, they did not even think of securing the troops from

the corruption of the populace of Paris. They took no precaution to shelter the king and his family from insult, in case of revolt; and in the fauxbourgs of Paris, the only commanding post, the Bastille, was furnished neither with a sufficient garrison nor with provisions to supply the few soldiers who were there. In short, the very maintenance of the troops that were assembled was neglected to such a degree, that their bread was made with damaged corn, while the women of the populace came to offer them some that was excellent, with wine and meat in abundance, not to mention their other means of corruption.

To this species of stupor, into which the court and the council had fallen, the adverse party opposed a measured, progressive, and constant march, proceeding from post to post towards dominion, without ever losing a moment or retreating a step. Resolved then to suffer no collection of troops either round Paris or Versailles, this party determined on an address to the king (the 8th of July 1789.) It was the work of Mirabeau, the principal orator of the commons, a man endowed by nature with all the talents of a tribune; violent and ardent in his disposition, but as supple in his conduct as he was wild in his passions; most ingenious in anticipating the reigning opinion, and diligent in preceding it, in order that he might appear to lead it; a coward at heart, but strong in intellect and bold in impudence; corrupted to excess, and glorying in corruption; dishonoured from his early youth by the most shameful vices, but attaching no value to honour; well calculating that a dangerous man could not be despised even by rendering himself despicable, and resolved to be indifferent to the esteem which morality commands, provided he obtained that which great talents, when they are become formidable, will attract and usurp.

The following is the address to the king which he proposed; a master-piece of crafty and perfidious

eloquence, and which, applauded as it well merited, was adopted by acclamation (July the 9th.)

" Sire, you have invited the national assembly to manifest its confidence in you; this was to anticipate its most ardent desire. We come to depose in the bosom of your majesty the liveliest alarms. Were we their object, had we the weakness to fear for ourselves, your benevolence would deign again to cheer us; and though you might blame us for having doubted your intentions, you would listen to our anxious complaint, dissipate its cause, and leave no uncertainty on the position of the national assembly.

" But, sire, we do not implore your protection; that would be offending your justice. We have conceived some fears, and we dare assert that they are intimately allied to the purest patriotism, to the interest of our constituents, to public tranquillity, and to the happiness of the beloved monarch, who, in smoothing for us the road to happiness, well deserves to pace it himself unimpeded and undisturbed. (Detestable hypocrite!)

" In the emotions of your own heart, sire, lies the true safety of the French nation. While troops are advancing from every side, while camps are forming around us, and the capital is invested, we ask each other with astonishment, Does the king suspect the fidelity of his people? Could he have doubted it, would he not have frankly declared to us his paternal solicitude? What mean these threatening preparations?

" Where are the enemies of the state and of the king, whom it is requisite to subjugate? Where are the conspirators, whom it is requisite to reduce? One unanimous voice answers in the capital, and through the whole extent of the kingdom: We cherish our king; we praise heaven for the gift with which it has blessed us in its bounty.

" Sire, the religion of your majesty could only be surprised under the pretext of public good. If

they who have given this counsel to our king had confidence enough in their principles to expose them to us, that moment would bring with it the glorious triumph of truth.

"The state has nothing to fear but from bad principles, that dare besiege the throne itself, and do not respect the crown of the purest and most virtuous of princes. And by what means, sire, do your counsellors induce you to doubt of the attachment and love of your subjects?

"Have you lavished their blood? are you cruel, implacable? have you abused justice? does the nation impute its misfortunes to you? does it name you in its calamities? can they have told you that the nation is impatient under your yoke? No, no, they have not done so. Calumny is at least not absurd: it seeks for some little probability in order to colour its atrocities.

"You have recently seen, sire, all your power over your people. Subordination has settled in the agitated capital; the prisoners, set at liberty by the people, have of themselves resumed their chains; and public order, which perhaps would have cost torrents of blood if force had been employed, has been re-established by a word from your mouth; but that word was a word of peace; it was the expression of your heart, and your subjects glory in never resisting it. How noble is it to exercise this empire! It is that of Louis IX, of Louis XII, of Henry IV; it is the only one that is worthy of you. We should deceive you, sire, did we not add, compelled by circumstances, this empire is the only one that it is now possible to exercise in France. France will not suffer the best of kings to be abused and perverted by sinister means from the noble plan which he himself has traced. You assemble us to fix the constitution in concert with you, in order to work the regeneration of the kingdom. The national assembly has just solemnly declared to you that your intentions shall

be fulfilled, that your promises shall not be in vain, that neither snares, difficulties, nor terrors shall ever retard its march, or intimidate its courage.

"Our enemies will affect to say, where then is the danger of the troops? and what mean their complaint, since they are inaccessible to discouragement? The danger, sire, is urgent and universal; it is beyond all the calculations of human prudence.

"The danger is for the people of the provinces; once alarmed for our liberty, we know no power that can curb them. Distance alone magnifies and exaggerates everything; it doubles, sours, and envenoms inquietude. The danger is for the capital. With what eye will the people, in the bosom of indigence, and tormented by the most cruel anguish, see its scanty pittance disputed by a crowd of threatening soldiers. The presence of the troops will excite, nay will produce, a universal fermentation; and the first act of violence, committed under the pretext of police, may begin a long and dreadful train of evils.

"The danger is for the troops. French soldiers, brought near the centre of political discussions, sharing the passions as well as the interests of the people, will perhaps forget that an engagement has made them soldiers, in order to remember that nature made them men.

"The danger, sire, threatens the labours that are our first duty, and which will only completely succeed, and acquire true consistence and permanency, in as much as the people shall consider them as wholly free. There is besides a contagion in the violence of passion. We are but men: distrust of ourselves, the fear of appearing weak, may hurry us beyond the boundary of prudence. Besides, we shall be beset with violent and unmeasured councils; and calm reason and tranquil wisdom utter no oracles amid tumult, disorder, and faction. The danger, sire, is yet more terrible; and judge of its extent by the

alarms that bring us to you. Great revolutions have had causes much less signal. More than one enterprise fatal to nations has announced itself in a less sinister and formidable manner.

"Do not believe those who talk lightly to you of the nation, and who can only represent it to you as their views may guide them: now insolent, rebellious, seditious; now submissive, docile to the yoke, and prompt to bow its head to receive it. These two pictures are equally faithless. Always ready to obey you, sire, because you command in the name of the laws; our fidelity is alike without bounds or blemish. Ready to resist all the arbitrary commands of those who abuse your name, because they are enemies of the laws, our fidelity itself prescribes this resistance, and we will always glory in deserving the censure which our firmness may excite.

"Sire, we conjure you, in the name of the country, in the name of your own happiness and glory, send back your soldiers to the posts from which your counsellors have drawn them; send back this artillery, the proper use of which is to defend your frontiers; send back, more especially, those foreign troops, the allies of the nation, that we pay to defend, and not to disturb our tranquillity,—your majesty has no need of them. And why should a king, adored by twenty millions of Frenchmen, seek at great cost to collect around his throne a few thousand foreigners? In the midst of your children, sire, be guarded by their love. The deputies of the nation are assembled to aid you, to establish the high rights of royalty on the immutable basis of public freedom. But, while they are fulfilling their duty, while they are yielding to reason and feeling, would you expose them to the suspicion of having yielded only to fear? Ah! the authority which all hearts freely give you is alone pure and immutable; it is the just return of your benefits, and the immortal appendage of the princes of whom you are the model."

This speech, so insolently flattering, this eloquent menace of a general insurrection, if the king, for the safety of the good and the terror of the wicked, kept a part of his armies near him, if he did not abandon his capital to all the excesses of licence and robbery, and the national assembly to the insults and threats of an insurgent populace; this affectation of including mutinous and revolted vagabonds in the praises of a good people; this arrogant caution that the king's welfare depended on his submission and compliance, and the formal declaration that this was the only empire he would henceforth be able to exercise, did not produce that effect on the mind of the king which the party expected. Through these respectful threats and hypocritical alarms, he saw too well that the real question was, whether he should abandon or maintain his legitimate authority; and that he was only exhorted to suffer himself to be disarmed and bound: he saw above all that in touching lightly on his good intentions, those facts were carefully omitted which rendered just and necessary the precautions he had taken. It was therefore requisite that he should explain himself; and to this language, full of artifice, he answered by reasons equally forcible and candid.

"No one," said he to the deputies, "is ignorant of the tumultuous and scandalous scenes that have passed and been renewed at Paris and Versailles, under my own eye and in the presence of the states-general. It is necessary I should make use of the means that are in my power, in order to restore and maintain order in the capital and the neighbourhood. To watch over the public safety is one of my principal duties. These are the motives which have engaged me to collect some troops around Paris. You may assure the states-general that they are only destined to repress, or rather to prevent a repetition of these tumults, to maintain the exercise of the laws, to secure and protect the liberty that should reign in your deliberations. Every species of restraint should be ba-

nished from them, and all apprehension of disorder or violence removed. None but evil-minded men could mislead my people on the true motives of the precautions I am taking. I have constantly studied to do all that could contribute to my people's happiness, and I have always had reason to feel secure of their fidelity and love.

"If, however, the necessary presence of the troops in the neighbourhood of Paris still cause some umbrage, I shall be willing, on the demand of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to Noyon, or to Soissons, and I would then repair to Compiègne."

This is what he was very sure that they would not ask. Nothing was more contrary to the plan they had formed than to separate themselves from the people of Paris. It was therefore more than useless to manifest his consent to it; and if, by fresh disturbances, the king were forced to this removal, why did he not command it? Why did he not repair to Compiègne with his household and a respectable guard, declaring null, and contrary to the right of safety and to the freedom of suffrage every resolution formed amid the troubled and agitated Versailles and Paris?

The popular party was careful not to quit its post. It needed the support of the populace; it was by agitating the mob that it rendered itself potent and formidable. It answered therefore, by its organ, Mirabeau, that "it belonged to the troops to remove from the assembly, and not to the assembly to remove from the troops. We have petitioned," said he, "for the removal of the army, and not of ourselves."

From that moment at least it was very evident that it was by the people that the commons intended to act; and in this struggle for sway, now about to begin, they wanted to have all their own forces and to leave the king none.

It was just however that the king should preserve at least a power of resistance. In the most temperate monarchies, the king has the right of the veto; and the necessity of the royal sanction, in order to give to the decrees of the deputies of the people the form and the force of laws, has never been doubted. Indeed, as the depositary of the executive power, the king had a right to examine the laws for whose execution he was to provide; and, in his quality of first representative of the nation, he was constituted the inspector of the rest. In the tumult and shock of the diverse passions and opposite interests that might divide a political assembly, it was often to be feared that the most prudent and most useful decisions would not result from intemperate discussion. One single voice above numerical equality might convert an unjust and violent decree into law. Whenever passionate eloquence and sound reason should be at variance, there was very little safety for the best and most equitable party. The king, in legislation, was therefore a moderator, a necessary regulator; it was therefore neither in the will of the king, alone, nor in that of the deputies of the people that the plenitude of legislative power ought to reside, but in the accord of these two wills; and the consent of the one, to the resolutions of the other, formed this royal sanction.

Now, if this right of examining and sanctioning the laws, of giving his consent to them or of interposing his veto were unacknowledged, contested, refused; if the monarch saw his legitimate authority half torn from him; if he beheld his throne shaken, his crown despised, the sceptre of his fathers ready to break in his hands, ought he not to arm to defend them? would it not be just, even in the eyes of the nation, that he should teach the commons to confine themselves within the bounds marked out for them in the instructions they received from their constituents?

These questions were agitated in the council, and alarmed the ministers.

"Every act of rigour," said they, "would be a step equally fatal; whether it should be requisite to support or to abandon it, it would be an hostility contrary to the feelings of the king, which might light up between his people and him the fires of civil war, and render odious the very power that it should have made formidable, or which would be disgraced if it suffered itself to be braved."

Placed between two rocks, in a strait where either the royal authority or what was called public liberty, was hastening to its end, having neither sufficient credit, nor sufficient influence to save both, they employed with the king all the means of dissuasion which his esteem and their zeal afforded them: they shewed him only imprudence and peril in their assembling discontented and corruptible troops, of which he thought himself secure. But, were they more firm in the will to obey, who could assert that their approach would suffice to re-establish order and calm? and, if this attempt to intimidate the people should fail in its aim, if the people, instead of being withheld, should be still more irritated by it, what expedient would then be found to command obedience, or appease rebellion? They saw, at the head of the popular party, men of an obstinate temper; they saw there also some crafty knaves, deep in the art of dissembling; but they still thought well of the national character; they reckoned on a great number of honest men in the commons; and the example of the king, his moderation, loyalty, and generous indulgence, might cause sentiments to prevail there analogous to his own. Their hope was the same as that of Lally Tolendal; when addressing the noblemen of his bailiwick, he said to them: "They deceive you, noble citizens, who tell you that the third estate has implored justice only to be unjust, and

that it has only wanted to cease to be oppressed in order to become the oppressor." This excellent young man soon recognized the illusion he had indulged; but what he hoped sincerely, Necker, Montmorin, la Luzerne, St Priest, all hoped like him. Thus, equally faithful to the state and to the king, the road of conciliation seemed to them to be alone practicable: for that of corruption was ever unwelcome to them, and the king would not have taken it.

You may conceive what must have been the perplexity of this prince. But everything warned him that it was time to adopt a system of firm conduct, and this new system required new ministers.

The dismissal of the present ones was resolved on upon the 11th of July.

On the morning of the 12th, the news had reached Paris; but it was not made public till the evening, at the theatres. A sullen indignation then seized on the public mind. It was concluded that the resolution of acting with open force had been formed at court without the knowledge of the king, and that the enemies of the people, by removing sage and moderate men from his counsels, were determined in spite of his resistance to draw him to their purpose The dismissal of Necker, above all, in the critical state in which the kingdom was, appeared to be a proof that they wanted to ruin and to starve Paris. At every theatre the representation was instantly interrupted. Men wild with alarm came and cried out to the actors: "Leave off! withdraw! the kingdom is in mourning! Paris is threatened, our enemies prevail. Necker is no longer in place, he is dismissed, he is gone, and with him are dismissed all the ministers who were the friends of the people!"

A sudden affright is spread throughout the theatres, the actors disappear, the spectators retire trembling and dismayed; and the resolution is already formed

through the whole city to demand that Necker, and all the good ministers who are of the same sentiments, may be restored to the state.

In every place where parties of the people usually assemble on festivals, the fermentation was extreme. The Palais Royal was filled with a tumultuous crowd, agitated like the waves of the sea in a violent storm. At first a mournful and continued murmur dwelt on the ear, and soon a threatening rumour more fearfully spread. The people took the green cockade; leaves of trees were substituted for it; and, as a signal for insurrection, the populace having entered the shop of a maker of wax models, took the busts of Necker and the duke d'Orleans, and carried them about Paris.

Another crowd assembled in the square of Louis XV, and the tumult continued to increase. To dissipate it, some troops were ordered to advance. Their commander, the baron de Bezenval, had repaired thither with a company of grenadiers of the Swiss guards. The prince de Lambesc came and joined him at the head of fifty dragoons of the royal German corps. The presence of the troops completed the irritation of the people. All began to insult them. The troops were careless of these clamours; but, assailed with stones, by which some of them were wounded, the dragoons were losing all patience, when Bezenval gave orders to the prince de Lambesc to advance in order to force the people to fall back into the Tuileries. This order was executed with so much caution, that not a man of the people was either beaten down or bruised. It was not till the dragoons were retiring that a madman, who obstinately persisted in shutting the Pont Tournant against the prince, was slightly wounded by him.

Throughout Paris the report was instantly spread of a massacre of the citizens in the garden of the Tuileries, where, it was said, the dragoons of Lambesc were riding in among the crowd with drawn

swords, and the colonel at their head, murdering old men, crushing children, beating down pregnant women, or making them miscarry with affright.

At the same time, on the false report that their regiment was insulted, the grenadiers of the French guards forced the duke du Châtelet, their colonel, to let them escape from the garden of the hotel de Richelieu, where he kept them confined. From that time the regiment of guards was entirely devoted to the people; and that was what the factious most ardently desired.

Thus Paris, without courts of justice, without police, without a guard, at the mercy of one hundred thousand men wandering wildly in the middle of the night, and for the most part wanting bread, believed itself on the point of being besieged from without, and pillaged from within. Twenty-five thousand soldiers were posted around its walls, at St Denis, at Courbevoye, at Charenton, at Sèves, at La Muette, in the Champ-de-Mars; and while they should blockade it, and cut off all supplies of provisions, it would be a prey to a starving people. Such was the terrible picture which, in the night between the 12th and 13th of July, was present to every fancy.

But the insurgents themselves, seized with the common terror, committed no pillage. The armourers' shops were the only ones they forced, and they there took only arms. As soon as it was day, the city was filled with a tumultuous populace, that, knocking at every door, asked with loud cries for arms and bread, and that, believing there was a magazine of muskets and swords under the town-hall, flocked thither in order to force it. I stop to explain by whom the town-hall was at that moment occupied, and by what species of tribunal the police was there exercised.

On the 10th of May, the elections of the city being completed, Target, the president of the assembly of the electors, persuaded them to sit permanently

during the session of the states-general. A resolution was taken to that effect with the consent and approbation of the popular faction. Thus, when at the end of June, after the royal sitting, the electors found their hall shut at the archbishop's palace, they procured admittance into the town-hall, and established themselves there the agents of the national assembly to the people of Paris.

I ought to render them this testimony, that, in circumstances of difficulty and danger, charged with the care of the public safety, they acquitted themselves in their functions like good and brave citizens.

It was to this assembly then, that, on the 13th of July, the assembled crowds addressed themselves to ask for arms, of which, they said, there were abundance in the vaults of the hall. But as this magazine did not exist, the people forced the doors in vain, the muskets of the guard were all that were found there, and they were carried off.

In the meantime, the alarm bell was rung in every church, and the districts assembled to decide on the means of providing for the safety of the city both within and without; for it was not less urgent to defend it against the villains with which it swarmed than against the troops that encircled it. From this moment the citizens formed bands of volunteers, who came and drew up by common consent in the squares and public gardens. But arms were still wanted, and still incessantly demanded at the town-hall. The mayor, the unfortunate Flesselles, is sent for; he arrives there through the crowd, calls himself the father of the people, and is applauded on that very spot where tomorrow his bleeding body will be dragged and torn.

The electors appoint a permanent committee at the town-hall, to be there accessible night and day to this people so tortured with affright. Flesselles, at the head of the committee, imprudently announces that he expects ten thousand muskets from Charleville,

and thirty thousand soon afterwards. He had even, as it is said, the fatal levity to trifle with the most impatient, by sending them here and there to places where he made them believe they would find arms. They hastened to the search, saw they were deceived, and returned to denounce him to the people as an impostor who, in betraying, insulted them.

The committee of the electors, in order to hearten the people, resolved that a Parisian army should be immediately formed, to the number of forty-eight thousand men. All the districts came to offer themselves to compose it on the same day. The green cockade was laid aside, and the red and blue took its place; (green was the colour of a prince, who was not a republican).

In the meantime the people had gone to the *garde-meuble*, and had carried away the precious arms that were preserved there as curiosities, either for the beauty of the workmanship, with which they were enriched, or for their antiquity, and out of respect for the heroes whose glory they recalled. The sword of Henry IV was the booty of a vagabond.

But for so many thousand men this small number of arms was a feeble resource. They returned furious to the town-hall, still demanding arms, saying that there were some, and accusing the electors of conniving with the enemies of the people, in order to leave Paris without defence. Pressed by these reproaches, which were accompanied by threats, the committee conceived the idea of authorising all the districts to get pikes and other arms of that kind made, and the people were satisfied.

But a better expedient, which the districts themselves conceived and adopted, was to send in the evening to les Invalides, and summon the governor Sombreuil to deliver to them the arms which they knew were deposited in the hotel. The commander-general of the troops, who had a camp very near there, and to whom Sombreuil addressed them, de-

manded time to send to Versailles for the king's orders; and that time was granted him.

The terror of the following night, more deep and more pensive, took a mournful character; the gates of the city were shut and guarded; patroles, already formed, kept the vagabonds in awe. Fires kindled in the streets inspired fear, intimidated crime, and shewed everywhere knots of the people wandering like spectres. This stern and dismal silence was only broken by the stifled and terrible voice of those who, from door to door, cried out—'Arms and bread!'

In the faubourg Saint-Laurent, the house of the monks of Saint-Lazare was set on fire and sacked. The incendiaries expected to find there a magazine of corn.

In the meantime, the Palais-Royal was full of those mercenary conspirators, who were employed to stir the fire of sedition; and the night passed there in accusations, and atrocious motions, not only against Flesselles, but against the committee of the electors, who were denounced as traitors to the country.

On the day before, five thousand weight of powder, which was leaving Paris, had been seized at the gates, and deposited at the town-hall, under the chamber of the electors. In the middle of the night, the few persons who remain on watch in this chamber are informed that, from the side of the faubourg Saint-Antoine, fifteen thousand men, the confidential band of the leaders of the Palais-Royal, are coming to force the town-hall. Among the number on watch was a citizen, le Grand de Saint Réné, a man of a feeble and sickly constitution, but of a firm and strong courage. "Let them come and attack us," said he, "we'll be blown up together." He immediately ordered the guards of the hall to bring six barrels of powder into the adjoining room. His resolution was known. The first barrel that was brought made the most intrepid turn pale, and the people withdrew. Thus, by one single man the town-hall was preserved.

The kingdom, too, would have been saved in the same manner, if the king had had such men at the head of his councils and his camps. But he himself recommended them to spare the people, and never could consent to any act of vigour and severity against his subjects; a virtuous weakness, that has brought his head under the axe of the executioner.

During this frightful night, the citizens kept themselves locked in their houses, each trembling at home for himself and for those that were dearest to him. But on the 14th, in the morning, these personal fears yielding to public alarm, the whole city was but one and the same people: Paris had an army; this army, spontaneously assembled in haste, was yet ill acquainted with the rules of discipline; but public spirit supplied them. Single, it commanded everything like an invisible power. What gave this great character to public spirit, was the address that had been employed to fascinate opinion. The best citizens, seeing in the troops that came to protect Paris only enemies, who would carry fire and sword within its walls, all imagined that they had to combat for their homes, their wives, and children. The necessity, the peril, the care of the common safety and defence, the resolution of perishing, or of saving what they had most dear on earth, alone occupied every mind; and formed of all tempers and all wills that surprising accord, which, of an immense and violently agitated city, made an army obedient to the intention of all, without receiving an order from any one; so that every one could at once obey, where no one commanded.

Fire-arms and powder were still wanting to this army; and the committee of the city having protested anew that none had been found even at the arsenal, the people returned to les Invalides. The order that Sombreuil expected from Versailles did not arrive. The people prepared to employ force; and such was the irresolution of the court, or rather

such was the repugnance of the king to every species of violence, that in the Champ-de-Mars, at a few paces from the hotel which they came to force open, the troops received no orders to defend it. Without choosing to yield anything, the government abandoned everything; a sure way of losing all with disgrace.

It was then under the eye of six Swiss battalions, and of eight hundred horse, as well dragoons as hussars, all motionless in their camp, that the Hôtel des Invalides was opened to the people; a very positive proof, as Bezenval has since affirmed it to be, that the troops were forbidden to fire on the citizens; and there was the great advantage of the people, that the king would only suffer them to be curbed, without ever consenting that they should either be treated as enemies or as rebels. This same order was observed throughout Paris, at the barriers, on the ramparts, and in the square of Louis XV. This, too, was what, in every post around, rendered the troops accessible to corruption, by the facility with which they were allowed to mix with the people.

This people, men and women, accosted the soldier, and with the glass in their hand presented to him the lures of joyous licentiousness. "What!" said they, "do you come to make war upon us? Do you come to spill our blood? Would you have the courage to draw your sword against your brothers, to fire upon your friends? Are you not Frenchmen and citizens like ourselves? Are you not, like us, the children of the people that ask only to be free, and to be no longer oppressed? You serve the king, you love him; and we too love our good king and are ready to serve him. He is not the enemy of his people; but he is deceived, and you are commanded in his name to do what he does not approve. You serve not him, but that unjust nobility, that nobility that dishonours you by treating you like slaves. Come, brave soldiers, come and revenge yourselves

for a servitude that disgraces you. The king and liberty! down with the aristocrats, our oppressors and your tyrants!"

The soldier, naturally the friend of the people, was not deaf to this language. He saw but one step to take from poverty to abundance, from constraint to liberty. A great number deserted; and, being so near Paris, it was impossible that they should not be corrupted.

The people then, in the presence of the troops of the Champ-de-Mars, ransacked with full licence the Hôtel des Invalides. Twenty-eight thousand muskets were found there in the vaults of the dome; and with this booty, and the cannon of the esplanade drawn through Paris in triumph, the conquerors returned to the town-hall. There they learned that the governor of the Bastille, the marquis de Launay, summoned in his turn to furnish arms and ammunition, had answered that he had none. A general cry was instantly heard from every corner of the square, 'Let's go and attack the Bastille.'

BOOK XVII.

This resolution appeared to be sudden and unexpected among the people; but it was premeditated in the council of the chiefs of the revolution. The Bastille, as a state prison, had always been odious on account of the iniquitous use to which the despotism of ministers had applied it, under preceding reigns; and, as a fortress, it was formidable, particularly to those populous and mutinous faubourgs which its walls commanded, and which, in their riots, saw themselves under the fire of the cannon of its towers. To agitate these multitudes at its will, and make them

act boldly, the republican faction then ardently desired that they might be rid of this overawing object. Honest men, even the most peaceful and most enlightened, wished too that the Bastille might be destroyed, because they hated the despotism of which it was the bulwark; and in this wish they consulted their personal security more than their real safety; for the despotism of licence is a thousand times more dreadful than that of authority, and the unbridled populace is the most cruel of tyrants. The Bastille then should not have been destroyed, but its keys should have been deposited in the sanctuary of the laws.

The court thought it impregnable; it would have been so, or its attack and siege would have cost rivers of blood, if it had been defended; but the man to whom the guard of it was confided, the marquis de Launay, would not, or dared not, or could not, use the means he had of rendering its resistance murderous; and the populace, that so vilely assassinated him, owed him thanks and praises.

De Launay had expected to intimidate the crowd; but it is evident that he wished to spare them. He had fifteen pieces of cannon on the towers; and, whatever calumny may have said to palliate the crime of his assassination, not one single cannon shot was fired from those towers. There were besides, in the interior of the castle, three cannon loaded with cannister shot, pointed in front of the draw-bridge. These would have made great slaughter at the moment when the people came pouring in crowds into the first court; he fired but one, and that but once. He was provided with fire-arms of every kind, with six hundred musketoons, twelve rampart muskets carrying balls of a pound and a half, and four hundred 'biscaïens.' He had procured from the arsenal abundance of ammunition, bullets, fifteen thousand cartridges, and twenty thousand pounds of powder. In fine, he had collected on the two towers of the draw-

bridge a mass of stones and broken iron, in order to crush the besiegers if they should advance to the foot of the walls. But, in all these preparations to sustain a siege, he had forgotten provisions; and, shut up in his castle with eighty invalids, thirty-two Swiss soldiers, and his staff, all the store he had on the day of the attack consisted of two sacks of flour and a little rice; a proof that all the rest was only to inspire terror.

The small number of the Swiss soldiers that had been sent to him were sure men, and well disposed to defend themselves; the invalids were not so, and he must have known that; but at least he ought not to have exposed them to the fear of dying for hunger. Unequal to his situation, and in that stupor with which the presence of danger strikes a weak mind, he looked on it with a steadfast but troubled eye; and rather motionless with astonishment than resolution. Unhappily, not a man in the council supplied the foresight he wanted.

To intoxicate the people with this first success, the attack and capture of the Bastille have been extravagantly extolled as an exploit. The following is the account of this conquest, which I have learned from the very mouth of him who was proclaimed and borne in triumph as the conductor of the enterprise, and as its hero.

"The Bastille," said the brave Elie to me, "was not forcibly taken. It surrendered even before it was attacked. It surrendered on the promise I gave, upon the honour of a French officer, and on the part of the people, that not a man should be hurt if the fortress surrendered." This is the simple fact, such as Elie attests it to me. The following details of it are written, as he dictates.

The fore-courts of the Bastille had been abandoned. Some determined men having dared to break the draw-bridge, which barred the entrance into the first court, the people rushed in there in crowds; and,

deaf to the voice of the soldiers, who from the tops of the towers forbore to fire on them, and called out to them to retire, they persisted in advancing towards the walls of the castle. It was then that they were fired upon by the soldiers; and, being put to flight, they saved themselves under the covert of the fore-courts. One killed, and a few wounded, spread terror even to the town-hall; multitudes came to demand urgently in the name of the people that deputations might be resorted to, in order to stop the carnage. Two of these deputations arrived, one by the arsenal, and the other by the side of the faubourg St Antoine. "Advance," cried the invalids to them from the top of the towers, "we will not fire on you; advance with your flag. The governor is going down, the castle bridge will be let down in order to introduce you, and we will give hostages." The white flag was already hoisted on the towers, and the soldiers held their arms inverted in sign of peace. But neither of the deputations dared to advance so far as the last fore-court. At the same time the crowd was pressing towards the draw-bridge, and firing from all sides. The besieged then had reason to think that these appearances of deputation were but a trick to surprise them; and, after having cried in vain to the people not to advance, they found themselves obliged to fire in their turn.

The people, repulsed a second time, and furious at seeing some of their own body fall under the fire of the fortress, took that revenge in which it usually indulges. The barracks and shops of the fore-court were pillaged; the house of the governor was delivered to the flames. The firing of one cannon, loaded with case shot, and a discharge of musketry, had driven back this crowd of robbers and incendiaries; when, at the head of a dozen brave citizens, Elie, advancing to the very edge of the ditch, cried out to the besieged to surrender, promising that not a man should be hurt. He then perceived a hand

extended through an opening in a part of the draw-bridge and presenting to him a note. This note was received by means of a plank that was held over the ditch; it was written in these words:—"We have twenty thousand pounds of powder. We will blow up the castle if you do not accept our capitulation Signed de Launay."

Elie, after having read the note, cried out that he accepted it; and on the part of the fort, all hostilities ceased. However, de Launay, before he gave himself up to the people, wished that the capitulation should be ratified and signed at the town-hall, and that to secure his own safety and that of his soldiers, an imposing guard should receive and protect them. But the unfortunate invalids, thinking to hasten their deliverance, did violence to the governor, by crying out from the court, 'The Bastille surrenders.'

It was then that de Launay, seizing the match of a cannon, threatened to go and set fire to the powder magazine; and he was perhaps firmly resolved to do so. The centinels, who guarded that magazine, presented their bayonets; and, in spite of himself, without further precaution or delay, he saw himself forced to surrender.

The little draw-bridge of the fort being first opened, Elie entered with his companions, all brave and honourable men, and fully determined to keep his word. On seeing him, the governor went to him, embraced him, and presented him his sword, with the keys of the Bastille.

"I refused his sword," said Elie to me, "and took only the keys." His companions received the staff and the officers of the garrison with the same cordiality, swearing to serve them as a guard and defence; but they swore in vain.

As soon as the great bridge was let down (and it is not known by what hand that was done) the people rushed into the court of the castle, and, full of fury, seized on the troop of invalids. The Swiss who were

dressed only in linen frocks, escaped among the crowd, all the rest were arrested. Elie, and the honest men who had entered first with him, exerted all their efforts to tear from the hands of the people the victims which they themselves had delivered up. But ferocity was obstinately attached to its prey. Several of these soldiers, whose lives had been promised them, were assassinated; others were dragged like slaves through the streets of Paris. Twenty-two were brought to the Grêve, and, after humiliations and inhuman treatment, they had the affliction of seeing two of their comrades hanged. When they were presented at the town-hall, a furious madman said to them: "You have fired on your fellow citizens; you deserve to be hanged; and you shall be so presently." Fortunately, the French guards interceded for their pardon; the people suffered itself to be persuaded. But it was without pity for the officers of the garrison. De Launay, torn from the arms of those who wished to save him, had his head cut off under the walls of the town-hall. In the midst of his assassins, he defended his life with the bravery of despair; but he fell under their number. Delorme Salbray, his major, was murdered in the same manner. The adjutant Mirai, had been so, near the Bastille. Pernon, an old lieutenant of the Invalids, was assassinated on the wharf St Paul, as he was going to the hall. Another lieutenant, Caron, was covered with wounds. The head of the marquis de Launay was carried about Paris by this same populace that he might have crushed had he not been moved to pity.

Such were the exploits of those who have since been called the heroes and conquerors of the Bastille On the 14th of July 1789, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the people had assembled before it; at forty minutes after four it had surrendered. At half an hour after six the head of the governor was carried in triumph to the Palais-Royal. Among

the number of conquerors, which has been said to amount to eight hundred, many people have been mentioned who had not even approached the castle.

The people, after this conquest, intoxicated by power newly acquired, perpetually fed with suspicion and anxiety, and rendered more savage because it still shuddered at the dangers it had run, now shewed only the character of a jealous and cruel tyrant. Government ought to have known, that for the people there was no barrier between licence and crime, but the fear of punishment, and in a time of trouble and sedition the defence of the Bastille was an object of the highest importance to public tranquillity. You have just seen to what excess it had been neglected. Neither Broglie, a minister and general, nor the king's council, nor the party of the nobles, no one had thought of inquiring whether its garrison was secure and sufficient, whether it was supplied with provisions, or whether the commander was a man of a sufficiently cool and determined courage. They had either supposed it useless or unattackable, or rather they seemed to have forgotten it.

It is nevertheless true, that if de Launay had made use of his artillery, he would have struck Paris with awe. He recollected, without doubt, that he served a good king; and among the people every man knew it as well as he.

Paris, at the moment of the attack, had hastened towards the Bastille. Sexes and ages, all were confounded around these ramparts that were loaded with cannon. What was it then inspired them? The king consents that his people should be threatened, but he will not consent that his people should be crushed. What a fatal lesson has been given to kings by the example of this!

In the evening, the assembled crowds thirsting for more blood, demand the head of Flesselles, who, in the morning, they said, had refused them arms, and who, in connivance with the court, had betrayed,

deceived, and trifled with them most insolently; and the Grêve and the town-hall resounded with these clamours. But the hot-bed of fermentation and popular rage was not the Grêve, it was the district of St Roch, the quarter of the Palais-Royal; it was there that Flesselles had been proscribed.

During the attack of the Bastille, this unfortunate man had attended at the committee of the town-hall, assailed by a troop of wretches, who loaded him with insult and announced his death. After two hours of silence and torture, he had resolved to go from the chamber of the committee into the great chamber, to demand of the people that he might be heard and tried by the general assembly of the electors, tired of life, and wishing rather to die than suffer so cruel an agony. And, indeed, by thus throwing himself into a pitiless crowd, he delivered himself to certain death. He went there, and took his seat in the circle of the electors. He saw himself aimed at from every side. But other incidents having diverted the fury of which he was the object, he profited by that interval, and leaning towards an ecclesiastic who was near him (it was the abbé Fauchet) he took him by the hand, conjuring him in a low voice to hasten instantly to the district St Roch. "It is there that my head is demanded," added he; "there spring all the accusations that are brought against me. Go and tell them that I only ask time to justify myself." Fauchet, moved by a sentiment of compassion for him, went to implore this grace, but implored it in vain. The object was to overawe those who, like Flesselles, might think themselves by duty attached to the king's party; and, in order to conquer probity by terror, more victims were requisite. The people was not yet sufficiently habituated to crime, and in order to train it to murder, its leaders wanted to exercise it. The district that conducted the insurrection was therefore inexorable, and Flesselles never again saw the man from whom he expected his deliverance.

Here I ought to observe to you what those were who were sent to the town-hall to demand the head of Flesselles. "They were," says a faithful witness, "men armed liked savages. And what men?—creatures such as no man ever remembered to have met in open day. Where did they come from? Who had drawn them from their dark retreats?"

"At the head of the committee of the electors," says the same witness, "Flesselles still shewed some boldness; till the fatal moment, he was listening with an air of interest and affability so natural that he would have saved himself by it, if the resolution of destroying him had not been irrevocably taken. He witnessed the ferocious joy that was loudly manifested at the sight of that lance which bore the head of the governor of the Bastille. He witnessed the efforts made, in those cruel moments, by a few good citizens to tear from the people some of its victims. He heard the cries of those who demanded that he himself should be delivered up to them. Yet, amid so many horrors, hazarding all in order to escape, and thinking himself for a moment forgotten, he dared to quit his place and slide in among the crowd. He had indeed penetrated it; but those who had pursued him into that chamber, and who, without doubt, had promised his death, pursued him still, crying out to him, 'To the Palais-Royal! to the Palais-Royal!' 'With all my heart,' said he to them as he went out. And the moment afterwards, on the staircase of the town-hall, one of these villains fractured his head with a pistol shot. This head too was carried about Paris in triumph, and this triumph was applauded. It was the same with the murder of the invalid soldiers, who were torn to pieces in the streets: so completely had the delirium of rage stifled every feeling of humanity."

"I have remarked," adds my witness, using an expression of Tacitus, "that if among the people few men then dared crime, many wished and all suffered it. Those wretches were not of the nation;

those villains that filled the town-hall; some were almost naked, and others strangely dressed in clothes of different colours, mad, and for the most part not knowing what they wanted, or demanding the death of those who were proscribed and marked out to them, and demanding it in a tone which it more than once appeared impossible to resist."

If the national assembly could have had any presentiment of the evils with which the kingdom was threatened by this dreadful anarchy; if it had foreseen how impotent its own efforts would be to force back within the bounds of legitimate authority this ferocious beast which it was eager to unchain; if those who flattered it had thought that they themselves might perhaps one day become its prey, they would have shuddered with a salutary fear. But, to give to themselves a reigning authority, they only thought of disarming that which alone could have saved the whole.

The citizens of Paris, blinded as they were respecting their true interests, abandoned themselves to the transports of an extravagant joy, when it was decided that the Bastille should be destroyed. The people, under the reign of Louis XI, would not have expressed more joy to see the iron cages broken. History, however, will render this testimony to the memory of Louis XVI, that of seven prisoners who were found in the Bastille, not one had been sent there under his reign.

While the city of Paris loudly declared itself in insurrection against the royal authority, the instigators of the rebellion triumphed at Versailles, in appearing to lament misfortunes and crimes which they had commanded; and, in order to alarm the king, they afflicted him with them every day. "You rend my heart more and more," answered he at last, "by the account you give me of the misfortunes of Paris. It is not possible to believe, that the orders which I have given to the troops are the

cause of these evils." No they were not so, for they were confined to the maintenance of order and peace.

At the same time, the assembly most urgently solicited the king to remove the troops, to dismiss the new ministers, and to recall those who preceded them. He began by ordering the retreat of those troops that were stationed in the Champ-de-Mars. But no orders were given for the departure of the other camps; and in Paris, which still believed itself threatened with an assault, the night between the 14th and 15th of July was again terrible. The people, become more savage, shuddered with fear and rage; the motions made at the Palais-Royal were lists of proscription. The next day, through a crowd of jarring opinions that agitated the national assembly, the voice of the baron de Marguerit was favourably heard. "It is not," said he, "in circumstances so afflicting that we ought to debate. Every superfluous word is a crime against humanity. I persist in the motion, which I proposed yesterday, to send new deputies instantly to the king, who shall say to him: Sire, blood flows, and it is that of your subjects. Each day, each instant adds to the frightful disorders that reign in the capital, and in the whole kingdom. Sire, the evil is at its height. It is by removing the troops from Paris and Versailles; it is by charging the deputies of the nation to carry words of peace in your name, that calm shall be restored. Yes, sire, there is one way worthy of you, and above all of your personal virtues; it is founded on the unalterable love of Frenchmen for their king; it is to place on this day all your confidence in the representatives of your faithful nation. We conjure you, sire, to join the national assembly without delay, in order to listen to truth, and advise with the natural council of your majesty on the measures best adapted to re-establish calm and union, and to secure the safety of the state."

This motion was carried by acclamation, and a new deputation was going to wait on the king, when the duke de Laincourt announced that the king himself was coming, and that he was bringing with him every favourable disposition.

This news caused the most lively joy in the assembly, and all honest men were expressing it when Mirabeau hastened to repress it. "The blood of our brothers is flowing in Paris," said Mirabeau; "that good city is in the horrors of convulsions in order to defend its own liberty and ours; and can we abandon ourselves to joy before we know that calm, peace, and happiness are to be re-established there? Though all the ills of the people were to cease, should we be insensible to those they have already suffered? Let a mournful respect be the first reception given to the monarch by the representatives of an unhappy people. The silence of the people is the lesson of kings."

As if the blood that was shed, as if the crimes of the people, the crimes commanded by himself and by his accomplices, could have been imputed to the king! Yet, in spite of the evidence of so black a calumny, the vehemence of this speech had replunged the assembly into a melancholy silence, when the king appeared, and standing in the middle of the deputies who stood likewise to hear him, spoke as follows:-

"Gentlemen, I have assembled you in order to consult you on the most important affairs of the state. There is no one more urgent, or that affects my heart more sensibly, than the frighful disorders that reign in the capital. The chief of the nation comes with confidence into the midst of its representatives to express to them his affliction, and invite them to discover means of restoring order and calm. I know that unjust prejudices have been encouraged; I know that some men have dared to publish that your persons were not in safety. Can it be necessary to quiet

you on such culpable rumours, at once contradicted by my known character? Well, then, 'tis I who incorporate myself with my people, 'tis I who resign myself to you. Aid me on this occasion to secure the safety of the state. I expect it from the national assembly. The zeal of the representatives of my people, met for the common safety, is to me a sure guarantee: and, depending on the fidelity and love of my subjects, I have given orders to the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles. I authorise, I request you to make known my intentions in the capital."

After the answer of the president, who finished by soliciting his majesty, for the assembly, a constant, free, and immediate communication with his person, the king withdrew, when the whole assembly hastened to put itself in his suite, and formed his train from the hall to the palace.

This national train accompanying the king through a vast multitude that rent the air with acclamations and vows, while, from the balcony in front of the palace, the queen, embracing the dauphin, presented him to the people, and seemed to recommend him to the deputies of the nation, was without doubt a majestic sight. But the triumph was really that of the conspirators, to whom the king had just abandoned himself. The confidants of the revolution were still in small numbers. The rest were all sincere. But the crafty knaves, insulting at the bottom of their hearts the noble sincerity of the king, and the credulous simplicity of the multitude, applauded themselves for the rapid progress they were making towards dominion, and suffered these sentiments of joy and mutual love to exhale, because they knew they could suppress them when their purpose should be ripe.

The numerous deputation that was sent to Paris, was received there, from the barrier to the town-hall, by an army of one hundred thousand men, differently

armed with instruments of carnage; a scene that was evidently prepared, as it were, to display the means they had of enforcing obedience if the king had not yielded; and with this terrible parade was mixed the joy of conquerors, and of that unbridled liberty which had produced only crimes, and with which even the best citizens suffered themselves to be intoxicated. A blockade, a siege, a famine, a massacre, were the black phantoms which had been employed to frighten them; and in seeing the troops retire that were supposed to be charged with the commission of these crimes, Paris thought it had nothing more to fear.

On their arrival at the town-hall, the deputies were applauded and crowned as the saviours and deliverers of a besieged city: a calumny which the marquis de la Fayette, in the speech he pronounced, did not think proper to contradict, not daring to render homage to the intentions of the king, for fear of offending the people.

It would have been natural, it would have been just to call to mind at that moment what the king had so often said, that he had only assembled the troops in order to maintain in Paris order, safety, and calm, and serve as a safeguard for the tranquillity of good citizens. It was this that la Fayette passed over in silence.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the moment is at length arrived which the national assembly most ardently desired: the king was deceived, he is no longer so. He has been to-day in the midst of us without arms, without troops, without that parade which good kings despise. He has told us that he had given orders to the troops to withdraw: let us forget our misfortunes, or rather let us only remember them to avoid for ever their repetition."

In his turn, the sincere and courageous Lally Tolendal addressed the people; and, in order to give

my narrative all the truth that it can possess, I shall transcribe his speech.

"In the hall in which we were received there were," says he, "citizens of all classes. An immense crowd was in the square, and I proved that it would have been very easy, had all wishes harmonised to effect it, to turn all their enthusiasm to the side of order and justice. They leaped for joy on hearing me speak of the honour of the French name. When I told them that they should be free, that the king had promised it, that he had come to throw himself into our arms, that he trusted in them, and that he sent back his troops, they interrupted me by cries of 'vive le roi!' When I said, we come to bring you peace, on the part of the king and of the national assembly; we must now carry back peace, on your part, to the king and to the national assembly, it was who should first repeat the cry of 'peace! peace!' When I added: you love your wives, your children, your king, your country; all answered a thousand times, 'yes.' When at last, pressing them still closer, I ventured to say: I'm sure you would not wish to torture all you love by bloody discord, would you? —there shall be no more proscriptions, shall there? —the law alone ought to pronounce them: there will be no more bad citizens: your example will reclaim them, and make them good:—they again repeated 'peace,' and 'no more proscriptions.'"

Thus, from that time, nothing was more easy than to re-establish order, and maintain the happiest understanding between the monarch and his people. The king desired nothing so much as to be loved; and at that price nothing was painful to him. The city of Paris had just appointed Bailly as its mayor, and la Fayette as commander of its militia. The king, who alone ought to have named to these two places, readily sanctioned the choices which the city had made. It had solicited Necker's recall; Necker

was recalled, as well as Montmorin, la Luzerne, and St Priest who had shared his disgrace; and the new ministers prevented their dismissal by resigning. In fine, Paris, disordered anew by its perfidious agitators, desired that the king might come himself to the town-hall to dissipate its false alarms, and the king repaired thither (on the 17th of July 1789) without any other guard than a few armed citizens of Paris and Versailles, in the midst of two hundred thousand men armed with scythes, pick-axes, guns, and lances, dragging cannon with them.

On the arrival of the king, and on his passage, all acclamation in his favour was forbidden; and if to the cries of 'vive la nation!' some added, 'vive le roi!' there were confederate villians who imposed silence on them. The king perceived it, and brooked this insult. After having heard at the barrier the speech of the mayor Bailly, in which he told him, that, if Henry IV had conquered his city, that city in its turn had just conquered its king, he received at the town-hall the republican cockade; he took it without repugnance; and, as his reconciliation with his people was sincere, he shewed so much candour and goodness that all hearts were moved. The felicitations of the orators raised emotion to enthusiasm; and, when Lally Tolendal spoke, all was bursts of sensibility and transports of love.

"Well, citizens," said he, "are you now satisfied? There is your king, whom you demanded so loudly, and whose name alone excited your transports when two days ago we pronounced it among you. Enjoy his presence and his benefits. There is the king who has restored your national assemblies, and who desires to perpetuate them: who wishes to establish liberty and property on an eternal basis: who has offered you, as it were, to enter into partnership with him in his authority, only reserving to himself that which was necessary to him for your happiness, that which ought always to belong to him, and which you ought

to conjure him never to forsake. Ah! let him at length enjoy consolation; let his noble and pure heart carry from you that peace of which it is so worthy; and since, surpassing the virtues of his predecessors, he has desired to place his power and grandeur in your love, to be obeyed only by love, to be guarded only by love, let us not be less feeling nor less generous than our king; and let us prove to him, that even his power and grandeur have gained a thousand times more than they have sacrificed.

"And you, sire, permit a subject, who is neither more faithful nor more devoted to you than all those who surround you, but who is as much so as any one of those who obey you, permit him to raise his voice to you, and say: Behold this people that adores you, this people that your presence intoxicates, and whose sentiments for your sacred person can never be the object of a doubt. Look, sire, comfort, console yourself by looking on all the citizens of your capital; look at their eyes, listen to their voices, penetrate into their hearts that bound to meet yours. There is not a man here who is not ready to shed the last drop of his blood for you, and for your legitimate authority. No, sire, this French generation is not so unfortunate as to have been reserved to belie fourteen ages of fidelity. We will all perish, if need be, to defend a throne that is as sacred to us as to you, and to the august family that we placed there eight hundred years ago. Believe us, sire, be assured we have never inflicted a painful wound in your heart that has not rent our own; that, amid public calamities, it is one to afflict you, even by a complaint that admonishes and implores, but that never accuses you. At length all sorrows will now disappear, and all troubles be appeased. One single word from your mouth has restored tranquillity. Our virtuous king has recalled his virtuous councils; perish those public enemies who would again sow division between the nation and its chief. King, subjects, citizens, let us mingle

our hearts, our hopes, our efforts, and display to the eyes of the universe the magnificent spectacle of one of its finest nations, free, happy, triumphant under a just, dear, and revered king, who, no longer owing anything to force, will owe all to his own virtues and our love."

Tolendal was twenty times interrupted by cries of 'vive le roi!' The people were charmed to be restored to their natural feelings; the king shared in them; and his emotion expressed them more vividly than eloquence could have done; but, if these feelings had been lasting between his people and him, he would have been too powerful in the opinion of the conspirators, who wanted to reduce him to the mere phantom of a king

BOOK XVIII.

The national assembly, on the part of the commons, as well as of the people, was marked by two opposing spirits, and two adverse characters: one moderate, weak, timid; that of the majority: the other passionate, extravagant, impetuous, and daring; that of the conspirators. We had seen the latter announcing only rational and pacific views, in order to guide the former at its will. We had heard one of its organs conjure the clergy, 'in the name of the god of peace,' to unite with that order which meditated the ruin of the church. We have just seen Mirabeau, in his address to the king, affect a hypocritical respect and zeal; but when, after having assured itself of the determination and ardent attachment of the populace, and of the effeminacy, indifference, and timidity of the rich and peaceful

class, this party seeing itself able to govern opinion with absolute sway, ceased to dissemble.

The very day after the king had gone to resign himself with such sincerity to the national assembly, the republican faction undertook to lay down, as a principle, that the assembly had a right to interfere in the formation of the ministry; and the two orators, who on this point openly attacked the royal authority, were Mirabeau and Barnave, both endowed with popular eloquence; Mirabeau, with greater phrenzy and bursts of passion, often too with wile and artifice; Barnave with greater frankness, nerve, and vigour. Both of them had supported the opinion, that the king should be deprived of the free choice of his ministers; a right which Tolendal and Mounier had strongly defended, by maintaining, that without this freedom in the choice of the objects of his confidence, the king would be nothing. The decree resulting from this discussion had left it undetermined; but the question, once agitated, was nevertheless the signal for combat between the two powers.

For this combat, the commons wanted a force ever active and threatening; and thence all the obstacles that Tolendal encountered in his motion of the 20th of July. It is he again whom you must hear:—

"From the point where we then were, it was evident," says he, "that nothing more was to be feared for liberty, but the projects of faction and the dangers of anarchy. The national assembly had only to put itself on its guard against the excess of its own power. There was not a moment to lose to re-establish public order. News had been already received that the commotions which had shaken the capital had been felt, not only in the neighbouring cities but in the distant provinces. They were announcing themselves in Britanny; they existed in Normandy and Burgundy; they threatened to spread throughout the kingdom. Emissaries, evidently dis-

patched from a central point, travelled every road, traversing cities and villages without sojourning in any, getting the alarm-bell rung, and announcing the approach of foreign troops, or of hordes of plunderers, crying out everywhere 'to arms!' and frequently distributing money."

(Indeed I myself saw some of them travelling on horseback the hamlet where I then was, and crying out to us, that hussars were ravaging the country around us, and setting fire to the ripe corn; that such a village was on fire, and another inundated with blood. There was no truth in it; but fear excited fury; and that was what the faction desired.)

With his hands full of letters that attested the excesses everywhere committed with impunity, Tolendal repaired to the national assembly, and there proposed the heads of a proclamation, which, after having presented to all Frenchmen the picture of their situation, their duties, and their hopes, invited them all to peace, secured their lives and properties, threatened the wicked, protected the good, and maintained the laws in vigour and the courts of justice in full force. "This project," says he, "was heard with loud applause: a second reading was demanded, and the acclamations redoubled. But what was my astonishment when I saw a party rise to oppose it! According to one, my sensibility had seduced my reason. These fires, these imprisonments, these assassinations, were afflictions which we must learn to support, for we ought to have expected them. According to another, my imagination had created dangers that did not exist. There was no danger but in my motion Danger for liberty, because it would take from the people a salutary fear, which should rather be encouraged than suppressed; danger for the assembly, that would see Paris declare against it, if it adopted the motion; danger for the legislative power, which,

after having broken the frightful springs of empire, would thus regenerate them with new strength."

The murder of Berthier, the intendant of Paris, and that of Foulon, his father-in-law, both massacred at the Grêve, their heads carried about the city, and the body of Foulon dragged and torn in the Palais-Royal, shewed that the populace, drunk with blood, still thirsted for it, and seemed to call loudly on the assembly to hasten and adopt the motion of Tolendal. Hear what he says himself of the slight impression which this horrible incident made.

"The next day (the 21st of July) I was awakened by cries of grief. I saw enter my chamber a young man, pale, disfigured, who hastened eagerly to throw his arms around me, and who exclaimed as he sobbed, sir, you have passed fifteen years of your life in defending the memory of your father, save the life of mine, let him be heard by his judges. Present me to the national assembly, and let me there demand that my father may be tried.' It was the son of the unfortunate Berthier. I conducted him instantly to the president of the assembly. Misfortune would have it that there was no sitting in the morning. In the evening it was too late. The father-in-law and the son-in-law had been torn in pieces.

"You may imagine," continues Tolendal, "that at the very first sitting I hastened to fix the general attention on this horrible event. I spoke in the name of a son, whose father had just been massacred; and a son, who was in mourning for his own father (Barnave), dared to reproach me for feeling when I ought only to reason. He added, what I tremble to repeat; 'Is then the blood which has been shed so very precious?' and every time he raised his arms, while uttering his sanguinary declamations, he shewed to every eye the mournful marks of his recent misfortune (weepers) and the incontestable witnesses of his barbarous insensibility."

But such, among the factious, was the general depravity of soul, that with them a cool cruelty passed for virtue, and humanity for weakness. Thirty-six country seats, demolished or burned in one single province; in Languedoc, a M. de Barras cut to pieces before his wife who was with child, and just ready to lie in; in Normandy, a paralytic old man thrown upon a burning pile; and various other notorious excesses were either passed over in silence in the assembly, or treated as episodes, if any one denounced them there.

It was the policy of the conspirators to leave the people no time for reflection. Cooled but for a moment, it might have felt that it was misled and deceived, that its ambitious leaders only made it their accomplice in order to make it their slave, and that, from crime to crime, they wanted to plunge it so deeply in guilt that it should see no safety for itself but in executing all those whom they might command. So that the proclamation proposed by Tolendal did not pass till all that could quiet the people had been blotted out of it. Besides, for fear of giving too much authenticity to this pacific proclamation, all weakened as it was, its opponents would not allow that it should be sent by the king into the provinces of the kingdom, and read in the churches; but only that the deputies should be entrusted with the care of sending it, each of them to their constituents.

The 31st of July was a day remarkable for Necker's return, and for the kind of triumph with which he was honoured at the town-hall.

In returning from Basle, where he had received the two letters for his recall, one from the king, the other from the national assembly, Necker had seen on his road the excesses in which the populace everywhere indulged; he had endeavoured to calm them, to spread on his passage milder feelings, and to inspire, wherever he went, a horror of injustice and

violence He found the roads covered with Frenchmen, who, hearing what had passed at Paris, and the assassinations near the town-hall, had been chilled with horror and affright, and who were hastening away in search of another country. Informed of these bloody scenes, from that moment his most ardent wish had been to convert the people of Paris from its blind barbarities, to restore it to the feelings of humanity and to make it efface the guilt which its criminal violence had imprinted on the national character. I speak here after what he himself has said; and whatever errors, whatever faults, whatever wrongs, may be attributed to him, no one at least will here doubt its sincerity. In this confidence, I will give you his own recital, which, without being less true, will excite more interest.

"Great and happy day for me (the 28th of July 1789)" says he in his recital; "welcome and memorable epoch of my life, when, after having received the most touching marks of affection on the part of an immense people, I obtained from its numerous deputies, assembled in the town-hall, and from itself afterwards, with cries of joy, not only the entire liberty of the prisoner whom I had defended (the baron de Bezenval) but a general amnesty, a complete oblivion of all the motives of complaint and distrust, a generous renunciation of the sentiments of hatred and vengeance, which had reigned so potently; in fine, a kind of peace and reconciliation with those numerous citizens, some of whom had already fled from their country, and others who were preparing to fly. This honourable resolution was purchased by my tears. I had demanded it in the name of the interest which I at that moment inspired, as a reward for my last sacrifice, and as the only and single recompense to which I would ever pretend. I knelt, I humbled myself in every way in order to succeed. I exerted, in short, all the powers of my soul, and seconded by the eloquence of a generous and feeling citizen (Cler-

mont-Tonnerre) I obtained the object of my hopes; and this first favour was granted me with one voice, and with all the transport of enthusiasm and kindness that could render it most dear."

The following was the resolution of the general assembly of the electors at the town-hall, on the same day, 31st of July.

"On the true, sublime, and affecting speech of M. Necker, the assembly of the electors, penetrated with the sentiments of justice and humanity which he breathes, has decreed that the day on which this dear and necessary minister has been restored to France ought to be a day of rejoicing. It therefore declares, in the name of the inhabitants of this capital, certain of not being disavowed, that it pardons all its enemies, that it proscribes all acts of violence contrary to the present decree, and that it henceforth regards those as the only enemies of the nation who shall disturb the public tranquillity by any excess.

"It decrees farther that the present decree shall be read in the parish churches, published by the sound of trumpet in all the streets and squares, and sent to all the municipalities of the kingdom, and the applauses it shall obtain shall distinguish good Frenchmen."

In this, lay the safety of the state, but the ruin of projects that could only succeed by disorder and terror.

"By the evening of this same memorable day," continues Necker, "all was changed. The chiefs of democracy had other intentions. They would consent neither to kindness, oblivion, nor amnesty: they had need of all the passions of the people; they had need above all of its distrust; and they did not choose, at any price, that a great and important event should be attributed to my prayers and my influence. They therefore assembled the districts, and contrived to animate them against a declaration which their representatives, the ancient electors named by them, and a general assembly at the town-hall, had adopted with

one voice, and which the first vow of the people had ratified. The national assembly was my hope in this unfortunate opposition, but it favoured the opinion of the districts; and I saw my edifice of happiness pulled down to the ground. And what was the object of this happiness? To retain among us those who, by their wealth and expenditure, supported labour and encouraged industry; to see a sentiment of confidence and magnanimity substituted for jealous persecution; to prevent that exasperation, which is the inevitable consequence of fears and alarms when we disdain to calm them; to preserve the French nation from those dreadful tribunals of inquisition known under the name of committees of enquiry; to render, in short, liberty more amiable by giving it an air less savage, and by shewing how it could ally itself with feelings of kind and indulgent gentleness, the most beautiful ornament of human nature, and its first want. Ah! how many evils would have been prevented, if the resolution taken at the town-hall had not been destroyed, if the first wish of the people, that pious impulse, had not been despised!"

When Necker spoke thus, he was far from foreseeing what enormities, what atrocious cruelties, would crown the crimes that were past.

But, from that moment, he ought to have felt how misplaced and miserably useless he would be, among men disdaining every principle of morality, and all feelings of justice and humanity.

It was by exercising the most violent despotism that the leaders of sedition had annulled the decree of the town-hall; and what Necker had passed over in silence, another witness, Tolendal, whom no one has dared to contradict, has told aloud.

"At the fall of night, the seditious had assembled in that Palais-Royal, famous from this time for all kinds of crimes, after having been so for every species of depravity; in that Palais-Royal, where history will be obliged to say that morals were corrupted,

troops debauched, the carcases of the dead dragged in triumph, and the heads of the living proscribed. There they had sworn to obtain the revocation of the decree of the town-hall, and had begun their march. One affrighted district had communicated its fear to several others; the alarm-bell had rung; the troop had swelled; the town-hall had feared to see itself besieged; in fine, on the reclamation of a few districts only, the assembly of the electors had been forced to submit, and, by a new decree, had retracted that of the morning, saying that it explained it."

On the 1st of August, when, at the election of a president, Thouret was appointed by ballot, the murmurs and threats of the seditious were instantly heard in the assembly. The election was denounced at the Palais-Royal as a treason; Thouret was proscribed there; if he accepted the presidency, the wretches threatened to go and assassinate him in his own house; he resigned, and this was a mortal blow to the liberty of the assembly; the greater number consisting of those weak men on whom fear imposes silence, or commands opinion.

The courts of justice themselves were awed; the laws were without force, and the people despised them. All had heard the ancient edicts declared null; they now refused to pay the taxes, previously established; no one dared to compel them to it, and the faction made them believe that it had freed them from taxation.

In the mean time, the treasury was quite empty, and its springs all nearly exhausted. Necker came to expose this penury to the assembly, and to request that it would authorise a loan of one million and a quarter at five per cent. This moderate interest was maliciously cavilled at; it was reduced to four; and the public now seeing in Necker only a minister opposed and disliked by the commons, the signal for his fall was the blow to his credit.

A patriotic contribution was the momentary re-

source resorted to by the assembly; and then, leaving the minister to torment himself with inquietude in order to provide for the exigencies of the state, it entered upon the work of a constitution which it authorised itself to create, not only without the powers and consent of the nation, but in contempt of the express command which the nation itself had inserted in the instructions to its constituents, not to touch the ancient bases and fundamental principles of the existing monarchy.

Till then, the feeble party had uniformly hoped to put an end to the usurpations of the commons, and all means of reconciliation had been employed. On the 4th of August, the evening sitting had been marked by resolutions and sacrifices that ought to have pacified all men. The clergy and the nobility had, by acclamation, renounced their privileges. These renunciations, offered with a kind of enthusiasm, had been accepted with transport; and the very great majority of the assembly considered them as the seal of an entire and lasting reconciliation. The good archbishop of Paris had proposed that a *Te Deum* should be sung, as a thanksgiving, on this great event; Tolendal, who never lost sight of the state's welfare, had moved that Louis XVI should be proclaimed 'the restorer of French liberty;' these propositions were unanimously carried. In fine, the king himself had consented without reserve to all the renunciations made and decreed in the sitting of the 14th of August. But he refused his assent plainly and simply to the ambiguous declaration of the rights of man, and to the nineteen articles of the constitution that had been presented to him. There were other articles to which all foresaw that he would refuse his sanction; and, although the *veto* which he reserved to himself was only suspensive, it was enough to arrest the march of the revolution. It became necessary to overcome this obstacle; and, if force were resorted to in order to conquer his

opposition, the king might well form a resolution to which he had so long refused his concurrence.

This was indeed the true reason why the project of having the king at Paris was formed, and why thirty thousand seditious rebels were sent to Versailles (the 5th of October 1789) with artillery at their head, and a crowd of those impure women who in all riots are made to march in front. The pretext of their mission was to go and complain of the dearness of bread.

I will not describe the brutality of that populace thus led to Versailles to carry off the king and his family. The trial of du Châtelet has revealed that horrible mystery, that crime from which the assembly in vain endeavoured to clear the duke d'Orleans and Mirabeau. The facts that relate to it are consigned to the memoirs of the time, which my children will read. They will there see, and shudder while they see, the faithful body-guards, who were forbidden by the king to fire on the people, massacred even to the threshold of the queen's chamber, and their heads carried on pikes under the windows of the palace; they will see that affrighted queen trembling for the king and for her children, fly from her bed, which a moment afterwards was pierced with a hundred bayonets, and hasten to throw herself into the arms of the king, where she expected death; they will see this august pair, in the midst of a savage people, oppose to its rage the most magnanimous mildness, shew it their children in order to move it to compassion, and ask what can be done to appease it. "Let the king come with us to Paris." This was the answer of the people, and the avowal of the plot which it was sent to execute.

What cannot be forgotten, is, that in the night when this sanguinary horde filled the courts of the palace, some individuals having raised their voices in the hall of the deputies, to propose that the assembly should go in a body to range itself around the king,

and to repress the commotion of the people, Mirabeau insolently opposed this motion, saying that it did not become the dignity of the assembly to move from its place. He did not choose to oppose the execution of his own orders.

The king might still have fled from these impious scenes; everything was prepared for his departure; his carriages and his guards were waiting for him and his family at the gates of the Orangery; some faithful friends pressed him to seize the time when the people, dispersed in Versailles, was resigning itself to sleep. But a greater number, trembling and in tears, conjured him on their knees not to abandon them. Deceived by the security of la Fayette, who answerd for the speedy restoration of tranquillity, the king, from fatality or from character, abandoned himself to his destiny, and lost that moment which was never to return.

As soon as he had arrived at the Thuileries with his family, the assembly declared that it could not remain separate from the person of the king; it came and established itself in Paris, on the 19th of October 1789, and in these changes the good people fancied it beheld its safety.

The first act of the king at Paris, was his acceptance of the first articles of the constitution, and the sanction of the rights of man.

These memoirs are not a history of the revolution. You will read it elsewhere, my children, and will see, after this epoch of the 19th of October, a long train of memorable events all easy to divine after the first victories of the successful party. The property of the clergy was declared national, on the 2d of November; the creation of assignats on the 21st of December; the quantity, form, and fabrication of this money, determined on the 17th of April 1790; nobility and all titles abolished on the 19th of June following; the king's flight on the 21st of June 1791; his return to Paris on the 25th; finally, the acceptance of the

whole constitution by the king on the 3d of September, and the promulgation of this act on the 28th of the same month.

There terminated the session of the constituent assembly; and it was then that I was separated from that friend, who in the labours and perils of the tribune had so honourably fulfilled his own duties and my hopes, and who had just been called to Rome, there to be loaded with honours, the abbé Maury, that man of talents so rare, and of courage that equalled his uncommon talents.

In speaking to you of him, I have only given you, my dear children, the idea of a good friend and an amiable man; I ought to make him known to you as a public character, such as his enemies themselves could not help considering him; invariable in the principles of justice and humanity; the intrepid defender of the throne and the altar; at variance every day with the Mirabeaus and Barnaves; the constant object of the threats of popular declaimers; exposed to the insults and the poniards of the people without, and certain that the principles for which he pleaded would fall under superior numbers; every moment repulsed, every moment returning to the combat, without ever having been shaken or wearied by the certainty of being conquered, by the danger of being torn in pieces, or by the clamours and outrages of an unbridled populace. He smiled at the threats of the people; he answered with humour or with energy to the invectives of the tribunes, and returned to his adversaries with a coolness that was not to be troubled. The order of his speeches, almost all spoken *ex tempore*, and for hours together, the concatenation of his ideas, the clearness of his arguments, the choice and abundance of his expressions, so just, so correct, so harmonious, and always animated, without any hesitation, rendered it almost impossible for his hearers to persuade themselves

that his eloquence was not studied and premeditated; and yet the readiness with which he rushed to the tribune, and seized occasions to speak, forced them to believe that he spoke from abundant knowledge.

I have myself been present more than once when he has dictated from memory what he had spoken on the preceding day, complaining that in his recollections his vigour was weakened, and his warmth extinguished. "There is only the fire and ardour of the tribune," he used to say, "that can render us eloquent." This phenomenon, of which there are few examples, can only be explained by the prodigious capacity of a memory which nothing has escaped, and by immense studies: it is true that, to that magazine of knowledge and ideas which Cicero has considered as the arsenal of the orator, Maury added the habit and familiar exercise of oratorical language; an inestimable advantage which the pulpit had given him.

As to the firmness of his courage, it had for its principle the contempt of death, and that resignation of life, without which, he used to say, a nation could no more have good representatives than good soldiers.

Such had the man shown himself who has constantly been my friend, who is so still, and ever will be so: the revolution of his fortune and of mine can effect no change in this mutual and solid friendship.

The moment when, embracing perhaps for the last time, we bade each other a last farewell, had something of a religious and melancholy gloom. "My dear friend," said he, "in defending the good cause, I have done what I could; I have exhausted my powers; not that I might succeed in an assembly where I was listened to in vain, but that I might disseminate profound ideas of justice and truth into the spirit of the nation, and of all Europe. I have even had the ambition of being heard by posterity.

It is not without heart-rending grief that I quit my country and my friends, but I carry with me the firm hope that the revolutionary power will be destroyed."

I admired this indefatigable perseverance of my friend; but, after having seen him contend in vain against that force which either bore along, or dashed in pieces all that opposed its rapid course, I had but little hope of living long enough to see the end of our misfortunes.

The legislative assembly, installed on the 1st of October 1791, followed and even exaggerated the spirit of the constituent assembly. I here again recall dates, in order to arrive at what is personal to me.

On the 29th of November, a decree was passed inviting the king to request the princes of the empire not to suffer the armaments of the fugitive princes.

On the 14th of December the king pronounces, on his declaration to these princes, a speech that is applauded.

On the 1st of January 1792, the decree of accusation is made against the brothers of Louis XVI.

On the 1st of March happened the death of the emperor Leopold.

On the 29th of May, the assassination of Gustavus III, king of Sweden.

On the 20th of April, declaration of war by France against the new king of Hungary and Bohemia.

In the month of June, the king refuses his sanction to two decrees; and this refusal becomes the pretext of the insurrection of the faubourgs, that are sent in a vast tumultuous mass to the Tuileries.

The king, who hears them threaten with savage cries and horrible imprecations to break open the doors of his apartment, orders that they may be opened. He presents himself with a calm air to hear their petition. They demand that he should sanction the decrees to which he has refused his assent. "My

sanction is free," answered the king; "and this is not the moment either to solicit or to obtain it."

Two days afterwards, in his proclamation against this act of violence, he declared that it would never be necessary to wrest from him his assent to whatever he should think just, and productive of public good; but that he would expose, if it were needful, his peace and even his safety in order to do his duty.

This resistance should have been a curb to popular despotism. The free acceptation of the laws, and the right which the king had reserved to himself of suspending those which he did not approve, was the fundamental article of a temperate monarchy, and of the oath that had been freely taken throughout the kingdom, "to the nation, the law, and the king:" but that alone would have arrested the tumultuous march of the revolution, and the faction would not consent that its power should be limited.

The 31st of July was marked by the arrival of the Marseillais at Paris; a kind of satellites that the revolutionists kept at their orders for great exertions.

On the 3d of August, in the name of the sections of Paris, Pétion presents to the assembly a petition for the deposition of the king.

On the 6th, a report is studiously spread at the Tuileries that the king has resolved to fly.

It was then that, by a too just presentiment of what was going to happen, my wife urged me to quit that country-house to which she had been so much attached, and to seek some retreat at a distance from Paris, where, in obscurity, we might breathe in peace.

We knew not whither to direct our steps. The tutor of our children decided our irresolution. It was he who assured us that in Normandy, where he was born, we should readily find a safe and peaceful asylum; but some time was requisite in order to procure it; and, on arriving at Evreux, we did not yet know where to lay our heads. The master of the inn where we alighted had, at a few paces from the

town in the hamlet of St Germain, a pretty little house, seated on the borders of the Iton, and at the gate of the gardens of Navarre. He offered it to us. Having taken this place, we resolved to stay there till Charpentier's family should have found us a suitable dwelling nearer to Gaillon, his native place.

If, in the painful state in which our minds then were, any retreat could have been charming, that of this little hamlet would have been so; but we had scarcely arrived at Evreux when we learned the horrible event of the 10th of August.

At Paris, at the dawn of day, of that day which was to precede days yet more fatal, the squares and streets near the Tuileries were full of armed men with a train of artillery. It was the people of the faubourgs, supported by the band of Marseillais, who came to besiege the king in his palace.

That unfortunate prince had only a few Swiss-guards for his defence; and, though it has been said that there was in the garden of the Tuileries a crowd of brave and honest men who would have rallied round his person if he had chosen to shew himself, he doubtless thought resistance either criminal or impossible; he was advised to repair with his family to the bosom of the national assembly; thither he fled.

In the meanwhile his brave Swiss soldiers, who, faithful to their orders, defended in the courts the approach to the palace, found themselves obliged to fire on the people. The people were repulsed, and the guards stood firm at their post, when they learned that the king had retired. Their courage then forsook them; and, having dispersed, they were almost all massacred in Paris.

The king was transferred to the prison of the tower of the Temple, with his wife, his children, and his sister, on the 13th of August.

On the 31st of August, the mayor and the city attorney (Pétion and Manuel) presented themselves to the assembly, at the head of a deputation, in the name of which Tallien, its orator, announced "that a number of turbulent priests had been arrested and imprisoned, and that, in a few days, the soil of liberty would be purged of their presence."

On the 2nd of September, at the convent of the Carmelites of the Luxembourg, at the seminary of St Firmin in la Rue St Victor, at the abbey St Germain des-Prés, several prelates and a great number of priests were massacred. The carnage lasted till the 6th at the Hôtel de la Force.

On the 8th, the prisoners from Orleans, sent to Versailles, were massacred there.

It was in these days of terror and trembling that a man came to lodge near us, in the hamlet of St Germain, who, as I supposed, was unknown to me. In his disguise, I had so much difficulty in recollecting where I could have seen him that he was obliged to tell me his name. It was Lorry, the bishop of Augers. Our recollection of each other was made tender by the misfortune of his situation, which he did not cease to support with considerable courage and firmness.

We soon became social friends; at his desire our table was in common; and in better times this accidental connection would have been reciprocally agreeable. Lodged together on the borders of a pretty river, in the most beautiful season of the year, having enchanting gardens, and a superb forest for our walks, perfectly agreeing in our opinions, in our tastes, and in our principles, the remembrance of a world in which we had lived furnished us with subjects for conversation that were inexhaustible; but all these sweets were imbittered, by the sorrows with which we were perpetually assailed.

The convention succeeded the legislative assembly

on the 21st of September. Its first decree was the abolition of royalty.

At the same time, at the name of republican liberty, columns of volunteers ran to the armies; we found ourselves on their march, and they disturbed our repose. Besides, the approach of winter rendered the place where we were, damp and unhealthy: we were obliged to quit it, and it was not without regret that we there left the good bishop. We retired, my wife and I, to Couvicourt.

On the 11th of December, the king appeared at the bar of the convention, and was interrogated. He asked for two lawyers, Tronchet and Target, for his counsel.

Target refused to perform this sacred duty; the virtuous Malesherbes eagerly offered to take his place; this was consented to.

Tronchet and Malesherbes asked to have the honest and feeling de Seze to assist them, and that too was granted.

On the 26th, the king appeared for the second time, with his three defenders.—De Seze addressed the assembly, but the king had not allowed him, in his defence, any oratorical parade. In obeying him, de Seze was but the more impassioned.

On the 17th of January 1793, the sentence of death was pronounced by a majority of 366 votes against 355.

The king lodged an appeal to the nation. The appeal was rejected.

On the 19th, it was decided by a majority of 380 votes against 310, that there should be no delay in the execution of the sentence, and on the 21st, Louis XVI had his head cut off on the 'Place Louis XV.'

His confessor, at the foot of the scaffold, pronounced these ever memorable words:—"Son of St Louis, ascend to heaven!"

The king on the scaffold wished to address the people; Santerre, commanding the execution, and

one of the leaders of the faubourg St Antoine, ordered the drums to beat, in order to stifle his voice.

This execution was succeeded at a little interval of time by that of the three other prisoners of the Temple. On the 21st of January, the king had perished on the scaffold. On the 16th of October, the queen his wife shared the same fate. On the 21st of Floréal in the following year, Elizabeth the king's sister terminated her innocent life under the same instrument of death ; and on the 20th Prairial of the same year, the dauphin died in the Temple.

BOOK XIX.

The French revolution might have pleaded an honourable example in ancient Rome. Louis XVI had not one of the vices of the Tarquins, nor could he be accused either of pride or violence ; without any other reason than that of being weary of its kings, France had the power to expel them and their whole race

But the 21st of January 1793 began, and could only begin, the reign of terror.

The revolutionists appeared to have conceived the vast infernal project of depraving a whole people, of associating vices and crimes, of propagating bad morals by bad laws, and of realising by general corruption all that is attributed to the dark genius of human nature.

Religious opinions, the belief in a God, the idea of futurity, could curb the inclination to crime ; the authority of the father could restrain the child ; morality, by its principles of humanity, equity, and modesty, could regenerate a corrupt race. The project of depravation was directed against all these ties.

We heard incredulity and blasphemy proclaimed; we saw libertinism affect to despise the idea of a God, sacrilege insult the altars, and crime pride itself on the hope of annihilation; we saw broken, all the ties of subordination that nature forms; children, made by the laws independent of their fathers, had only to wish for their death in order to be secure, without their consent and in spite of their will, of sharing their spoil. The conjugal knot was still the means of perpetuating domestic virtues, and of keeping in intimate union the husband, wife, and child—this tie was rendered fragile at will; marriage became no more than a legal prostitution, a transient connection, which licentiousness, caprice, and inconstancy, might form and dissolve as fancy varied. In fine, honour, public faith, decorum, the respect for self and for public opinion, and the veneration which the sacred image of virtue inspired, had offered a rallying point for souls susceptible of repentant feelings, and awake to the impressions of example. All this was destroyed. The impudence of vice, the audacity of shame, the emulation of licence even to the most unbridled dissoluteness, were professed and erected into maxims of republican morality; and the system of Mirabeau, and of the duke d'Orleans, that system, the aim of which was the dark corruption of a whole generation, seemed to reign throughout France. Thus was formed that revolutionary despotism, that colossus of mire, kneaded and cemented with blood.

Retired as we were in our cottage of Ablonville, to which we had gone on quitting Couvicourt, we did not cease to dread the influence of so corrupted an age on our children; and we were employing every care to fortify them by a salutary and virtuous education, when the almost sudden death of their faithful tutor added a domestic affliction, that completed the measure of our sufferings. A putrid fever of extreme malignity robbed us of that excellent young man. Our children must remember the grief which

this loss caused us, and the fear we had lest they should suffer from the contagious air of a pestilential malady.

Their mother and I knew not what course to take, and our last resource was to go and seek refuge in some inn at Vernon, when the idea was suggested to us of asking asylum of a venerable old man, who, in the village of Aubevoie, at a little distance from ours, occupied a house large enough to lodge us all, without any inconvenience to himself. This circumstance of my life has something romantic in it.

The old man, who, affected by our situation, was eager to receive us, was one of the monks who had been driven from the neighbouring monastery of Carthusians. His name was dom Honorat. He was older than I. His manners called to mind those of the anchorets of the Thebaid. This excellent man seemed to be sent by heaven to edify and to console us. He breathed piety, but a piety all gentleness, indulgence, affection, and charity; a piety that was truly evangelic. He rarely allowed himself to dine with us; but, for an hour in the afternoon, and somewhat longer in the evening, he used to come and discourse to us of the great objects on which he incessantly meditated, of divine providence, of the immortality of the soul, of the life to come, of the morality of the gospel; and all this flowed naturally, simply, and from the bottom of his heart, with a lively faith and true feeling. It would have been cruel to express a doubt on subjects that gave consolation to his age and solitude. The soul of this good old man was perpetually in heaven; and it was so grateful to us to raise ourselves to heaven with him, that it would have been inhuman to have wished to make him descend. He revived us under the dejection into which we had been thrown by the death of the king; and in calling to recollection the words of the confessor, 'son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven,' "Yes," said he with confidence, "he is now before

God, and certain I am that he is imploring pardon for his enemies." He thought the same of the virtuous martyrs of the 2nd of September.

The alleviation which a pious hermit might feel in his situation by associating with us, was offensive to the mayor of Aubevoie. At the expiration of eighteen days, he came to tell me that it was time for us to retire. Fortunately, the air of our house was purified; and, after having suitably testified our gratitude to him who had so well received us, we returned to our home.

This modest and humble dwelling was my own, I had bought it; but what a fatal change did it announce in our past fortune. I had just quitted, near Paris, a country-house that formed our delight, a garden plentifully stored; and that smiling retreat was changed, as by the wand of an enchanter, into a species of cottage very small and very decayed. It was here that we were obliged to endeavour to accommodate ourselves to our situation, and, if possible, to live as honourably in poverty as we had lived in days of ease. The trial was painful; my literary places were suppressed; the French Academy was soon to be destroyed; my pension as a man of letters, the fruit of my labours, was no longer of any value. The only solid property I still had was that little farm at Paray, which the prudent foresight of my wife had engaged me to purchase. I was obliged to lay down my carriage, and to turn away even the servant that my old age would have needed. But, in this narrow dwelling, where we had scarcely the indispensable necessaries, my wife had the good understanding and the art to limit our expenses, by simplifying our wants; and I can say that our own sad condition affected us but little in comparison with the public calamity. The care I gave to the instruction of my children, the tender part that their mother took in their moral education, and if I may be allowed to say it, the excellence of their dispositions, were an inex-

pressible resource to us in our solitude. They consoled us for a misfortune, which was not the misfortune of their age. At least we forbore to afflict them with it. The storm passes over their heads, used we to say, smiling on them; and for them we have the hope of more calm and serene weather.

But the storm still increased; we saw it extend itself over the whole nation; it was not a civil war, for one of the two parties was passive and disarmed; but on one side it was a jealous hatred, and on the other a melancholy terror.

Millions of men to keep in pay in the armies, and many other excessive expenses, absorbed infinitely more wealth than the contributions of the state and the sale of the property of the clergy and the emigrants could furnish. The paper-money, multiplied to infinity, destroyed itself; its accelerated fall drew along with it that of credit. Commerce was ruined. The war did not afford sufficient resources in the conquered countries. It was decreed (on the 10th of March 1793) that the properties of the condemned should devolve to the republic; and this was what was called coining money with the guillotine on that 'Place de la Revolution,' which overflowed with blood.

Hence it was that wealth became a cause of proscription, and that not only men, commendable for their merit, the Malesherbes, the Nicolaï, the Gilbert-de-Voisin, but men remarkable for their fortune, a Magon, a Leborde, a Duruey, a Serilly, and a crowd of financiers were hurried to death. Thus, when old Magon was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and asked his name; "I am rich," answered he, and disdained to say more.

In order to give more latitude to the tables of proscription, those who were denounced were denoted under the vague names of enemies of the people, enemies of liberty, enemies of the revolution, in fine, under the name of 'suspected;' and all those were considered as 'suspected' who, either by their con-

duct, their connections, or their language, had shewn themselves the partisans of tyranny (that is to say, of royalty) or the enemies of the republic, and in general those to whom certificates of civism had been refused. Now, in refusing these certificates, the government was excused from all explanation of the motive and cause of such refusal, by the decree of the 30th of January 1793; accusation and judgment were likewise exempt from proof. In a decree sentencing the enemies of the people to the pain of death, passed the 22nd Prairial, year two, it was said, those are reputed such who seek to destroy liberty, either by force or by artifice; to degrade the national convention and the revolutionary government of which it is the centre; to mislead opinion, and prevent the instruction of the people; to deprave morals, and corrupt the public conscience; in fine, to blemish the purity of revolutionary principles. The proof necessary to condemn them, added this decree, shall be every kind of material or moral document, that can naturally obtain the assent of a just and rational understanding. —The rule for passing judgment is the conscience of the juries, enlightened by patriotism. Their end is the country's triumph, the ruin of its enemies. If there exist documents of the nature above described, no witnesses shall be heard.

It is with this equivocal and perfidious language that fair-spoken hypocrisy instituted the jurisprudence and arbitrary proceedings of our criminal tribunals. No proofs, no witnesses, the consciences of the juries! and of what juries? of the creatures and supporters of Robespierre, Lebon, Barrier, Francastel, and of so many other tigers, drunk, yet insatiable, with human blood.

One of the itinerant executioners of the faction had a guillotine engraven on his seal, as an emblem Another, at his dinner, had one of those instruments on his table, with which he amused himself by cutting off the head of a chicken that had been served

up to him; and while these made a mockery of the instrument of their barbarity, others boasted to the convention of their economy and diligence in the execution of its decrees. "Shooting is too tedious," one of them wrote to the convention, "and powder and ball are thereby expended. We have adopted the plan of putting them (the prisoners) in large boats in the middle of the river; and at half a league from the town we sink the boat. Saint-Florent and the other places," added he, "are full of prisoners. They too shall have the patriotic baptism." I need not say what shudderings of horror we felt at the railleries of these monsters. The atrocities that made humanity tremble, the drownings of Carrier in the Loire, the cannonades with case-shot of Collot-d'Herbois at Lyon, obtained honourable mention in the journals of the convention. The infernal acts of Lebon in the Pas-de-Calais were only 'forms somewhat severe,' which ought to be pardoned, and they were pardoned!

A formidable party was suddenly formed in the bosom of the convention against Robespierre; Tallien denounced him. He was instantly outlawed (the 9th of Thermidor), surprised, torn from the town-hall, whither he had flown, and dragged to the scaffold (on the 10th) where he had every day immolated so many innocent victims.

After the death of Robespierre, the committees and the revolutionary tribunal were renewed, and the convention disavowed their past cruelties; but it declared (on the 22nd of Frimaire, year 3) "that it would receive no appeal in the reversal of judgments passed by the criminal tribunals, authorising the confiscation of property to the use of the republic, and executed during the revolution."

At the same time, the fermentation of the public mind was not extinguished. The society of the Jacobins did not forget that it had been all-powerful; it saw itself dispersed, and it could not suffer that

this anarchical power, which was its sanguinary conquest, should be usurped by an opposing party. Its enemies were in vain cautious of giving it offence; it felt the curb, and champed in silence. The convention wanted to weaken by purifying it; and the committees were charged to unite and prepare the plan of this purification on the 13th of Vendemiaire. All correspondence and intercourse between the popular societies were forbidden on the 25th. But fire lay lurking under the embers, and to prevent it from spreading was still a vain effort.

The convention put itself on its defence against denunciation, by a decree of gaurantee, which regulated the manner in which the trial of a member of the national representation should thenceforth be conducted, passed on the 8th of Brumaire; but this guarantee, in the case of insurrection, was no security; and the tumult began to be threatening around the hall of the Jacobins on the 19th. The convention decreed that this hall should be shut; and this decree was sent to the armies and popular societies on the 20th. The commotions of the people in the centre of Paris, and in the faubourg St Antoine were but the more furious.

On the 18th of Frimaire, in order to strengthen the party which opposed the league of the jacobins, the sixty-six deputies, put under arrest on the 3rd of October 1793, were brought back to the convention, and three of the ancient terrorists, convicted of excesses which they had committed at Nantes, were condemned to death. The act of accusation was pronounced against Fouquier Tinville, public accuser, and he was condemned with fifteen of his accomplices. At the same time, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, and Billaud Varenne were put on their trial.

Finally, the whole convention took an oath to pursue, even to death, the successors of Robespierre.

The jacobins seemed at their last gasp. Some young men, assembled in the garden of the Palais-Royal, had there burnt a manikin in the costume of jacobinism, and carried its ashes to the common sewer of Montmartre, with this inscription on the funeral urn :—" Pantheon of the jacobins of the 9th of Thermidor."

Yet such was the inquietude of the assembly, that among all these acts of vigour, it still gave a signal of alarm and distress. For so I call the decree wherein, foreseeing its own dissolution, it ordained, " that, in case of such dissolution, all the representatives who should have escaped the parricidal sword should repair as quickly as possible to Châlons-sur-Marne." The event proved that it had been well foreseen.

On the 1st of Prairial, some women of the populace having forced open the doors of the hall of the assembly, with cries and insults that interrupted the deliberations, a crowd of men instantly rushed in with them, and the head of one of the deputies was laid on the table. The conquest would have been secure, if the people had profited by the momentary terror it had spread. But the insurgents amusing themselves with seizing the seats that were abandoned to them, one of them, whose name was Romme, had the imprudent vanity to seat himself in the chair of the president, and to lose time by pronouncing decrees there. By these decrees he ordained the arrestation of the members of the committees of the government, the enlargement of all those detained since the 9th of Thermidor, and the recall of Barrère, of Collot d'Herbois, and of Billaud-de-Varenne This mad boast of authority lulled the fury of the people ; and, while he was giving laws, one of the deputies entered the hall at the head of the armed force, chased away and dispersed the multitude, and restored courage and liberty to the assembly.

The blood of the terrorists then began to flow

again in a full stream; and the leaders of the popular sedition were executed in the presence of the people.

Thus, between despotism and anarchy, the armed force was the only arbiter, and the chiefs of the conquered party were led to the scaffold.

This was but as a spectacle for the same part of the nation, that had an equal abhorrence of anarchy and of despotism.

The convention at length felt the necessity of regenerating the republic by changing, not the principle, but the form of a government which was republican by name but despotic in reality, and by feigning to divide powers in order to balance them. Such was the object and artifice of the new constitution. In this shadow of fundamental laws, which a commission was charged to frame, and which it presented on the 5th of Messidor, in the year 3, two legislative councils and an executive directory composed the corps to which the national power was to be confided.

The two councils, one of five hundred, and the other of two hundred and fifty deputies, chosen every year by the majority of votes in the electoral assemblies, were invested with the power, one of proposing, the other of accepting or refusing new laws, the latter being the regulator and moderator of the former. Thus far the public interest, supposing the persons elected to be free and enlightened, might be in good hands.

But to these two councils were added an executive directory, armed with the public force, in order to maintain order and the laws; and it was there that the most absolute and most tyrannical despotism of which history affords any example, established and entrenched itself.

The five members who should compose the directory were to be chosen out of fifty candidates proposed by the council of five hundred; and it was to

the council of two hundred and fifty (called the council of ancients) that it belonged to choose them.

These Pentarchs were to be successively removable; at first one was to be excluded every year by lot, and replaced; and afterwards each was to retire only at the expiration of his five years' reign, and in the order of succession.

Thence it came that the best and wisest men were not solicitous to be of the number of the elected, whom chance might exclude at the end of one or two years, and who besides were to run the risks of a first trial.

But all had a right to aspire to these eminent dignities of the state, and to be elected to them more than once. Thus their first care had been to compose the commission, created for framing the constitutional act, of the most ardent, most adroit, and most ambitious republicans; and these had endeavoured to give to this light oligarchy all the authority, force, and consistence, possible.

The conduct of the greatest affairs of the state-politics, finances, relations with foreign countries, commerce, alliances, war and peace, the armies, their formation, their direction, the choice of the generals and their removal, the nomination to military employment—all belonged exclusively to this council of five. In the interior, the police, the use of the armed force and the right of calling it into action, the right of inspection over the treasury and over the receivers of the taxes, the management of the public revenues, their distribution and application to the exigencies of the state, without ever being accountable for them, the choice and office of the ministers employed under their orders and dismissible at their will, the superintendance of the courts of justice, the immediate control of the constituted authorities, and of the agents employed by them in every part of the administration; finally, the right of having, in the depart-

ments, even in the smallest towns, commissaries posted as legal spies, and the right of annulling the elections which the people should have made of its magistrates and its judges;—such were the prerogatives lavished on the directory by the constitutional act, without including what it afterwards added.

Thus all the means of governing imperiously, of intimidating, and of corrupting; the use of the armed force; the disposal of the treasures of the state; the interest that mercenary men in the armies, the finances, and all the employments of the state, would have to gain the favour of these all-powerful Pentarchs; the submission of the chiefs to the authors of their fortune, the example they would give of it to the soldiers and to the subalterns; among the magistrates of the people, the fear of being dismissed from their employment, the desire of continuing in it; in the national assembly, the ambition of having for friends the promoters to distinguished places, and those who held in their hands rewards and punishments, and distributed them as they were well or ill served: all this, I say, made the directory a colossal power, before which the councils sunk into nothing.

But it was first necessary that the constitution should be accepted; the people too might perceive that all that was proposed to them was but a tyranny cleverly masked and learnedly organised; it was necessary, besides, to take care that the spirit of it was not changed in the assembly which the approaching elections were about to form; and this was all managed in the most impudent manner.

BOOK XX.

The events which I have just recalled to memory have so occupied my fancy, that amid so many public

calamities I have almost forgotten myself. The impression which this mass of misery made on me was indeed so lively, and so deep, it was very natural that what concerned only myself should have very often been forgotten. Not but that I endeavoured, by diversions of labour and study, to defend myself from these wearisome reflections whose continued action might have terminated in a dark melancholy, or in a fixity of ideas still more dangerous to the weak and frail organs of man.

When my imagination could be diverted by amusing reveries, I made new tales, less gay than those which I had written in the sunshine of my life, and the smiling leisure of prosperity; but a little more philosophical, and in a tone that suited better with my age and the circumstances of the times.

When these dreams failed me, I exerted my reason, and tried to employ the time of my retreat and solitude better, by composing, for the instruction of my children, an elementary course of study, in little 'Treatises of Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics, and Morality,' in which I collected with care what I had learned in my reading of different kinds, in order to transmit the fruits of it to them.

Sometimes, to amuse or instruct them by example, I employed our winter evenings in recounting to them by the fire-side some little adventures of my youth; and my wife, perceiving that these recitals interested them, pressed me to write for them the events of my life.

It was thus that I became engaged to write these volumes of my Memoirs. I will freely confess, with madame de Stael, that I have only painted myself in profile; but I wrote for my children.

These recollections were a real comfort and alleviation to me, inasmuch as they effaced, at least for moments, the sad images of the present, by the gentle dreams of the past.

I now, however, come to an epoch when the in-

terest of public affairs seized on me more strongly and more closely than ever. By my duty as a citizen, I was called to that primary assembly of the canton of Gaillon where the new constitution was going to be proposed. This was the moment to observe the state and shades of national sentiment, and that observation was interesting; for the problem was to be submitted to discussion, and simultaneously solved by the majority of votes in all the primary assemblies throughout the republic.

In that where I was present, it was evident to me that two parties balanced each other.———

SEQUEL.

Here the manuscript of the Memoirs of Marmontel breaks off; but the particulars of the brief remainder of his life are soon narrated. He continued to occupy himself with his literary labours in his little cottage at Ablonville, until the month of April 1797, the epoch at which the electoral assemblies were held for the renewal of a third part of the national assembly, in virtue of the articles of the third constitution. He then repaired to Evreux, and collected the suffrages of his department, by which he was expressly charged to defend, in the national council, the cause of the Catholic religion. This engagement he faithfully endeavoured to fulfil, and pronounced before the legislative assembly a discourse on the Free Exercise of Public Worship, the religion in question being then necessitated to solicit a right which in its own times of ascendancy it had been generally strongly disposed to deny. Being named a member of the council of ancients, Marmontel returned to Paris, and lived there wholly occupied by his functions, till the decision which rendered void the election of his department of the Eure, with those of many others. He then retired again to his cottage, escaping, possibly in consequence of his advanced age, the transportation endured by most of his friends. In the latter end of 1799, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and medical aid proving fruitless, he expired

on the 31st of December in the same year, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and was buried with catholic rites in his own garden.

Since the death of Marmontel, besides the autobiography forming the subject of these volumes, there have appeared Memoirs of the Regency of the duke of Orleans, printed from his original manuscript in two volumes 12mo

THE END.

LONDON.
PRINTED BY W. CLOWES, STAMFORD-STREET.

MAY 27 1929